



GUIDE TO LACROSSE INJURY PREVENTION

Lacrosse is a physical sport that involves swinging sticks, high speed projectiles, and fast running. Because of the high speeds and high number of collisions in men's lacrosse, helmets as well as face masks, mouth guards, gloves and upper body padding are mandatory for all players. Women also play at high speeds, but only incidental contact between players is allowed. Mouth guards for women are required; in 2005 protective eye wear was mandated.

- In high school play, the injury rate for adolescent boys was slightly higher than that for girls. The most prevalent injuries for adolescent girls and boys are knee and ankle sprains resulting from non-contact mechanisms.
- Male players had significantly higher rates of shoulder, neck, trunk, and back injuries and higher game-to-practice injury ratios. They are also more likely to suffer a concussion due to player-to-player contact.
- Female players had higher rates of overall head injuries, many involving contusions and abrasions from stick and ball contact.
- In college, more than 60 percent of all severe game injuries for women were non-contact lower extremity sprains and strains and knee derangement (ACL injuries).

INJURY PREVENTION MEASURES

- **The National Athletic Trainers' Association suggests that high school athletes engage in conditioning training at least six weeks before the start of practice.**
- **Previous injury is the most important risk factor for injury.** Do not return to play too soon. Follow your doctor's recommendations. Your team needs its players on the field, not on the sidelines.
- **Proper Warm-Up is essential to injury prevention**
- **Proper strength training will decrease injuries.**
 - Learning to squat, jump, land, change direction, and balance will help prevent knee and ankle injuries.
 - Performing specific hamstring and groin exercises will help prevent pulls to these areas.
- **Use properly fitting cleats, mouth guards, and eyewear.**
- **Focus on training and education in stick handling.**
- **Enforce current rules of play.**
- **Make sure first aid is available at all games and practices.**