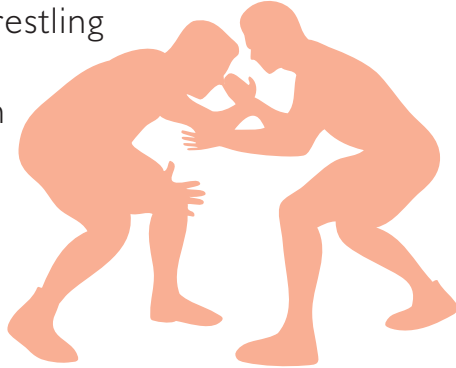


# Wrestling safety

A PARENT'S GUIDE FOR GETTING KIDS BACK IN THE GAME

The object of wrestling is to pin the opponent, which can result in injuries to the knees and shoulders. This reference guide provides information on the most common wrestling injuries requiring treatment.



## SHOULDER INJURIES

**Shoulder injuries** are common among wrestlers. They most often are caused by the collision that is forced when one wrestler drives another into the mats. Different types of injuries may occur. Seek immediate medical care when the collar bone appears deformed or if the athlete indicates the shoulder is "out of socket." These indicate serious joint abnormalities that require immediate treatment or rehabilitation.

## KNEE INJURIES

A common sudden injury in wrestling is a **Medial Collateral Ligament (MCL) sprain or tear**, which occurs when the knee is forced inward during a collision. The collision is usually with another player and the knee is hit on the outer side, causing pain on the inner side. Athletes with a damaged MCL often experience pain, which can be followed by a lot of swelling within 24 hours.

- For sudden knee injuries, athletes should see a pediatrician or pediatric sports medicine physician if pain and/or swelling persist after PRICE treatment for one day (see PRICE treatment, printed on back).

Knee pain that comes on slowly over time can indicate other problems such as joint alignment, cartilage defects, and damage to tissues caused by repetitive movements and activity.

- For gradual onset knee injuries, athletes should see their pediatrician or pediatric sports medicine physician if pain returns quickly with activity at the next session or is not gone after two weeks of forced rest.

## HEAD INJURIES

A **concussion** is a brain injury usually caused by a sudden jolt or a blow to the head or neck. This can occur in wrestling when the head is driven into the mat or when hitting heads with another wrestler.

An athlete does not need to be knocked out, or have memory loss, to have suffered a concussion. In fact, most athletes who suffer a sports-related concussion DO NOT lose consciousness.

You may observe that an athlete with a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Exhibits unsteadiness.
- Moves clumsily.
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent.
- Can't recall events either before or after hit.
- Is confused.
- Forgets plays.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Has a behavior or personality change.
- Loses consciousness.

An athlete with a concussion may have:

- Headache.
- Balance problems or dizziness.
- Sensitivity to light or noise.
- Concentration or memory problems.
- Nausea.
- Confusion.
- Double or fuzzy vision.
- Feelings of being "in a fog."

An athlete with signs of a concussion should be removed from play immediately and not allowed to return until evaluated by a doctor.

Do not leave an athlete alone after a concussion.

Call for immediate medical help if your child displays:

- A headache that gets worse, lasts for a long time or is severe.
- Confusion, extreme sleepiness or trouble waking up.
- Vomiting (more than once).
- Seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably).
- Trouble walking or talking.
- Weak or numb arms or legs.
- Any other sudden change in thinking or behavior.

Most athletes with a concussion will recover completely within a few weeks of the initial injury. Returning to play before completely recovering puts the athlete at risk for a more serious injury, long-term damage and even death.

## SKIN DISORDERS

Excessive friction on the skin during wrestling wears down the skin's defensive barrier, making the body more vulnerable to skin infections. Athletes with any of the following skin disorders should be seen by a physician before returning to wrestling:

**Ringworm** is a fungal infection that can be treated with prescription medications and the prescribing physician will make recommendations regarding returning to play. Characteristics of ringworm include:

- Ring-shaped.
- Reddish.
- Scaly or crusty.
- Surrounded by a ridge.
- Enlarges slowly.

*continued on back*

**T**he Sports Medicine Center at Children's offers the only comprehensive, integrated program in North Texas specifically designed for young and growing athletes. The center goes beyond treatment and rehabilitation of traumatic injuries that occur on the playing field to problems associated with sports participation, including cardiac disorders, asthma and nutrition.

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## SKIN DISORDERS *continued*

**MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)** is one of the most dangerous infections facing athletes today. Staph infections have been around for generations, but only recently have they become resistant to many of our antibiotics used to fight them.

MRSA must be diagnosed and treated as soon as possible to avoid prolonged or life-threatening illness. Athletes with any of the following signs and symptoms should see a pediatrician or sports medicine physician:

- Small red bumps – these may turn into a deep, painful abscess.
- Irritations that resemble pimples, boils, or spider bites.
- Swollen area that is warm to touch.
- Fever.

**Warts** are caused by a common skin virus and can spread easily when wrestling. They are commonly found on wrestlers' hands and feet, but they can appear anywhere. Although over-the-counter remedies are available for most warts, a pediatrician or sports medicine physician should assess the wart(s) and recommend the return-to-play plan.

Signs and symptoms include:

- Rough growths.
- Dome shaped.
- Botherome or painful.
- Brown or gray in color.
- Warts on the foot may grow inward.
- Spread quickly.

## WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Athletes should aim to stay close to their competition weight in the off-season in order to avoid dangerous weight-cutting practices during the competitive season. Weight-loss practices such as dehydration by excessive sweating, drinking nothing or very little, spitting, using laxatives and diuretics or fasting/starvation are dangerous and can lead to severe health problems. Dehydration prior to weigh-ins also decreases strength and performance.

Athletes who desire to lose weight should not lose more than 1-2 pounds a week to avoid break down of lean body mass. Once athletes achieve a healthy body weight, weight maintenance should be emphasized.

Weight loss is best achieved using a combination of reducing caloric intake and increasing calories burned. Nutrition tips for good weight control include:

- Give your body energy from sources of carbohydrates, proteins and fats. Do not omit any food groups.
- Choose whole-grain foods, lean protein and healthy fats at meal times.
- Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables and fiber.
- Drink calorie-free beverages; eat fresh fruits instead of drinking fruit juices.
- Watch your portion sizes.
- Choose low-fat dairy products.
- Do not skip meals. Eat a healthy snack if hungry in between meals.
- Limit high-calorie foods with added sugar and fat – read food labels to compare calories and look for reduced-sugar and reduced-fat varieties of your favorite food products.

## BUMPS, BRUISES, TWISTS & MUSCLE STRAINS

These can affect all areas of the body. Recommended treatment is the **PRICE** formula:  
**P**rotect the area with a sling or crutches, if necessary.

**R**est the injured area.

**I**ce the injury for 20 minutes at a time. Do not apply the ice directly to the skin.

**C**ompress the injured area with a wrap. Do not pull tightly, as this can cut off circulation.

**E**levate the injured area above the heart, if possible.

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