



Basketball Injuries

Basketball was introduced in 1891 by Dr. James Naismith using a soccer ball and two peach baskets. Today's high-speed, physical sport scarcely resembles the original game. It's no wonder an estimated 1.6 million injuries are associated with basketball yearly.

How are the most common basketball injuries treated?

Ankle Sprains

Rest, ice, compression and elevation (RICE) is good for ankle injuries. The need for X-rays and evaluation by a physician depends on the severity and location of pain. An ankle injury in a younger child could impact the growth plates and should be evaluated by a physician.

Jammed Fingers

When the basketball contacts the end of the finger and causes significant swelling, you might have a jammed finger. Ice and taping the finger to the adjacent finger may provide relief. If pain and swelling persist, evaluation by a physician and an X-ray is recommended.

Knee Injuries

Basketball requires extensive stop and go, as well as cutting maneuvers that can put the knee at risk. Injury to the medial collateral ligament (MCL) is most common and can be treated with ice, bracing and a gradual return to activity. An injury to the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is a more serious injury that normally requires corrective surgery.

Deep Thigh Bruising

Treatment includes rest, ice, compression and elevation. Commercially available girdles with thigh pads are now available for protection as well.

Facial Cuts

Depending on the depth of the injury, the cut may require stitches or butterfly sterile tape. Ice may provide pain relief and decrease swelling. Players can return to play after all blood is removed and the wound is dressed.

Stress Fractures

Rapid increase in activity or training can cause a stress fracture especially in the foot and lower leg (tibia). Once diagnosed, a period of immobilization and non-weight bearing is recommended. Return to play is permitted once the fracture has completely healed and you are pain free.

How can basketball injuries be prevented?

- Have a pre-season physical exam
- Hydrate adequately, because waiting until you're thirsty is often too late
- Pay attention to the weather, especially if it is hot and humid, to avoid heat illness
- Maintain proper fitness, preparing yourself physically
- Progress gradually back into basketball after inactivity through aerobic conditioning, as well as strength and agility training
- Avoid overuse injuries by taking a season off, listening to your body and decreasing training time if pain or discomfort develops
- Talk with your coach and athletic trainer about an ACL injury prevention program
- Return to play only when clearance is granted by a health care professional

Need immediate treatment for a basketball injury?

The Children's HealthSM Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine offers treatment for all sport-related injuries. Call to book your appointment today. With same-day and next-day appointments, we can get you in and back in the game.

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