



Health and Safety Guidelines

Prevention of injury is better than cure.

The following key points will help you prevent injuries in football:-

- Warm up - warming up is very important and is essential in minimising the risk of injury.
- Warming up results in improved flexibility and prepares you not only physically, but also mentally for football activity. Warming up should include five to ten minutes of light activity before stretching.
- Stretching is also essential, without stretching muscles lose their flexibility and may fail to respond effectively during football. To ensure maximum safety whilst stretching the following points should be adhered to:
 - Warm up prior to stretching.
 - Stretch before and after exercise.
 - Stretch alternate muscle groups.
 - Stretch gently and slowly - never rapidly.
 - Hold stretches for a minimum of 5 to 10 seconds.
 - **Never** stretch to the point of pain.
 - Always breathe slowly and easily; never hold your breath.

Playing areas and facilities have a great role to play in injury prevention. If equipment is inadequate or faulty or the playing surface inappropriate, then the players may be put at risk. It is important that playing areas are firm and level and free from obstructions such as stones, glass etc.

Weather conditions must be considered when playing football. Even in a cold climate, dehydration can occur. Players must remember that thirst is not a sign of dehydration. Dehydration can occur without a person feeling thirsty. Plain water is the best fluid replacement and ideally should be consumed before, during and after an activity. Suitable clothing on hot days also reduces the likelihood of dehydration. Cold weather conditions can cause serious muscle injury, so if a player is resting between activity, warm clothing should be worn and warming up again before resuming is recommended.

Children should always have the following items with them during training sessions and match days:-

- Shin Pads.
- Boots and / or trainers.
- Drink.
- Protective clothing in case of bad weather.
- A change of clothing.

Other important points to consider:-

- Always report an injury.
- Players must NOT wear jewellery.
- Inform your Manager / Coach of any medication being taken.