

Preparing Children for Outdoor Sports



The Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors (ACAC) offers some health tips to get your soccer star ready for game day.

- **Warm up muscles before running.** Proper warm up will help prevent injuries and strains on muscles and joints. Young athletes should begin with a slow jog to warm up their legs and arms and then do appropriate stretching of all the major muscle groups (from largest muscles groups to smallest).
- **Keep hydrated.** Ensure your child drinks plenty of fluids before, during and after physical activity to ensure they stay hydrated.
- **Eat the proper foods.** Nutrition is equally important for your young star. The calcium in milk is essential for healthy bones and reduces the risk of joint and muscle-related injuries. A good, balanced breakfast is the most important meal of the day, as is eating a healthy meal at least an hour before and after practice or a game. This provides proper nutrient replenishment and refuels the body.
- **Suitable clothing and proper equipment that fits correctly.** Parents are all too familiar with their youngsters' lack of fear and belief that they are invincible. Safety and injury prevention are important when young athletes take to the field, so make sure they have the proper fitting equipment for the sport they play.
- **Plenty of rest.** Eight to 10 hours of sleep is essential for a growing and energetic young athlete. Lack of sleep and proper rest can catch up with your child and decrease performance—not to mention increasing the chances of injury.

If your child or teen experiences a sport-related injury, ensure you seek professional health care attention. Doctors of Chiropractic are trained to treat sprains and strains in all age groups and can provide advice on sports training, nutrition and injury prevention for young athletes.

Contact your local chiropractor or to find a chiropractor in your community, click on [Find a Chiropractor](#).