

Banner Health experts urge caution as youth sports resume

Sports medicine experts warn recent inactivity could increase health risks

PHOENIX (May 15, 2020) – Banner Health’s sports medicine experts emphasize the need for caution as youth athletes return to sports and outside recreation, since reduced physical activity over the past several weeks could lead to a higher risk of injuries and heat illness.

“Children returning to sports must be especially careful as they’re more likely to experience dehydration, overheating and sprains, strains or other injuries,” said Dr. Steven Erickson, medical director for Banner Sports Medicine and Concussion Specialists. “As outside temperatures are quickly rising, kids are overager to resume activities at full throttle. Many children aren’t aware their stamina and heat tolerance likely declined while they were staying at home.”

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Erickson offers several tips as kids rapidly transition from spending more time indoors to playing in the heat.

To avoid heat illness:

- **Stay well hydrated.** Drink 20 ounces of water two to three hours before exercise, and another 20 ounces half an hour before. Drink 3 liters of fluid a day, whether or not you’re exercising. Don’t wait until you’re thirsty to drink.
- **Be mindful of the sun.** Stay out of the sun from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. when it’s the strongest. Seek shade whenever possible. Wear wide brim hats, sunglasses and lightweight SPF clothing that covers as much of your body as possible.
- **Use sunscreen.** Experts suggest mineral sunscreens that include zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen to provide protection from both UVA and UVB rays. Use SPF 15 or higher and apply 15 minutes before sun exposure. Reapply during halftime or between innings.

To reduce risk of sports injuries:

- **Pace yourself.** It’s important to warm up and stretch before physical activity. Build up your training program gradually. Make sure the required equipment for each sport is properly fitted.
- **Avoid overuse injuries.** Young athletes are at risk for overuse injuries because their muscles, tendons and bones are still growing. Their bodies need more time to recover between activities. Repetitive motion from playing the same sport activity, such as overpitching, can cause serious injuries.
- **Don’t ignore injuries.** If you can’t walk or play your sport without significant pain or discomfort, you shouldn’t participate until you see a doctor. Doing so can cause additional injury to the joint or a new injury from trying to protect the sprain.

For more tips and information, visit www.bannerhealth.com/sportsmedicine.

About Banner Health

As one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country, the team at Banner Health is committed to ensuring all Banner locations are a safe place for care. Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals and an array of other services, including: Banner Imaging, Banner Telehealth and Banner Urgent Care. Team members are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of patients, be it a routine checkup, elective surgery or an urgent health service. Waiting room and employee workstation layouts maintain proper social distancing; screenings are conducted at hospital entrances to verify that all employees and visitors are well; and, all Banner physicians are equipped to visit patients remotely. Learn more about Banner’s commitment to safety at bannerhealth.com/safecare.

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