

# GEAR UP.

Don't put your body on the line for sport  
when protective equipment can save you from injury

## The Facts

- protective equipment should be worn at all times (training and games)
- it should fit correctly
- it is important to regularly check and maintain protective equipment
- use new equipment prior to competition to break it in
- equipment should be specific and appropriate for the sport and the size of the athlete
- equipment should always be used according to manufacturer's guidelines and the recommendations of the sporting body concerned
- remember injuries usually mean time on the sideline, PREVENTION IS THE KEY

## The Equipment

### WRIST, ELBOW & KNEE GUARDS

- protective wrist guards can be useful to protect from impact when falling onto an outstretched hand
- padded knee protectors absorb impact forces from falls onto concrete, skating surfaces or colliding with racing poles
- elbows are at risk when falling and padding will reduce grazing and protect the joint from impact

### SHIN PADS

- shin injuries are common in sports where there is a fast moving object or kicking sports eg hockey, softball, cricket, lacrosse, soccer
- you should ensure that the shin pads are appropriate for the sport ie. different shin pads for hockey and soccer

### SHOULDER PADDING & BODY PROTECTORS

- in tackling sports such as Rugby League and Union, shoulder protectors are recommended to protect the top of the shoulder joint from an impact injury
- padded body protectors can help to protect the trunk, particularly the chest area, from impact injury in sports such as fencing or softball and baseball (catcher and referee)
- "boxes" for boys in sports such as cricket and hockey are essential to protect the genitals

### GLOVES

- protective gloves can help to prevent injuries of the fingers, thumbs and hand in sports such as cricket, baseball, softball and hockey
- gloves can also protect the hands from blisters which require gripping eg equestrian sports, golf and abseiling



# The Equipment (continued)

## MOUTHGUARDS

- if participants are involved in sports where they are at risk of a blow to the head or face from either opponents or equipment they should wear a properly fitted mouthguard
- a mouthguard correctly fitted by a dentist can protect teeth, prevent biting of the lips and act as a cushioning layer between the teeth

### MOUTHGUARDS SHOULD

- fit the mouth accurately
- stay in place comfortably
- allow normal breathing and speech
- be made of appropriate material which is non-toxic with measured thickness and coverage
- be custom designed and fitted by a qualified professional

## HELMETS

- in sports where high speed collisions are a possibility (eg motor cycle injury, cycling) hard-shell helmets are of proven value
- in sports that have the potential for missile injuries (eg baseball, lacrosse, cricket) or for falls onto hard surfaces (eg gridiron, ice-hockey, skating) specific helmets may reduce the chance of head injuries
- helmets worn should be approved by the sporting association concerned

## EYE PROTECTION

- sports with a high risk of eye injury (when protective devices are not being worn) involve a high speed ball (or puck), the use of a bat or stick, close aggressive play with body contact and collision, or a combination of both eg. racquet sports (racquetball, squash, tennis, badminton), lacrosse
- any athlete with normally reduced vision in one eye should always use protective eyewear for any sports
- eye protection glasses are available from your local squash courts and selected sports stores consult your optometrist for advice on vision requirements and protective equipment specific for your sport

## ANKLE TAPING AND BRACES

- ankle taping and braces can protect the ankle from injury when an athlete lands awkwardly
- they can be used to protect a previously injured ankle when a player returns to sport
- ankle braces & tape can be purchased from your local pharmacy or sports store
- for advice about what type of braces to buy and how to tape effectively contact your local sports physiotherapist, sports doctor or sports trainer

## FOOTWEAR

- shoes should be considered an important part of protective equipment
- athletes should be aware that appropriate shoes for sport can help prevent injuries
- shoes should be properly fitted for the individual and be appropriate for the sport or activity and playing surface

## REMEMBER

- many injuries are preventable
- the use of correctly fitting and sport specific protective equipment may reduce the chances of missing sport due to an injury
- protective equipment should be worn at all times during sport and not only during matches
- for sport specific information please visit our websites

**For further information contact:**  
**Sports Medicine Australia (SA Branch)**  
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**Or visit our Websites:**  
[www.smartplay.net](http://www.smartplay.net)  
[www.smasa.asn.au](http://www.smasa.asn.au)