



# Northampton Baseball & Softball

PO Box 347  
Leeds, MA 01053

*“Youth athletics built on integrity, perseverance, community, character & teamwork with a passion to back it up”*

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## *Basic First Aid Guide for Coaches*

### **Practice Common Sense**

There’s been an accident – one of your players is hurt! What do you do?

*Keep Calm* – try not to panic.

*Provide Reassurance* – a hand on the shoulder and some encouraging words help.

*Be Prepared* – have your first aid kit with you. Know what’s in it.

*Do No Harm* – when in doubt call 9-1-1.

### **Common Injuries / Illnesses Seen on the Baseball Field Sprains and Strains**

**Sprains** are injuries to the ligaments around joints. They typically result from severe twisting or outside forces bending a joint in an opposite direction of its normal function.

The most common sprains are those of the knee, ankle, wrist, fingers, and toes.

#### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Pain in or over the affected joint
- Swelling and tenderness to touch
- Bruising (typically develops after a period of time)
- Loss or limited motion or ability to bear weight

#### **Treatment**

- Rest – remove player from game
- Ice – apply ice pack to affected area
- Compression – apply ace wrap to limit swelling and pain
- Elevation – to limit swelling and pain
- See MD if pain and swelling is severe, or if player is unable to move joint in typical range of motion.

**Strains** are injuries to muscles that typically result from overuse or stretching a muscle group beyond normal parameters. The most common strains are those of the shoulder (especially in pitchers), groin muscle, hamstring, thigh, lower back, and rib cage. The best way to prevent a strain is to ensure players stretch and warm up gradually before games and workouts.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Pain in the affected area typically described as “burning” or a “dull ache”
- Tenderness to touch
- Loss or limited motion or ability to bear weight

### **Treatment**

- Rest – remove player from game
- Ice – apply ice pack to affected area
- Compression – apply ace wrap to limit swelling and pain
- Elevation – to limit swelling and pain
- See MD if pain is severe, or if player is unable to move affected area in typical range of motion.

### **Fractures and Dislocations**

**Fractures** are breaks in a bone due to blunt trauma or severe twisting. Common fractures seen in baseball are those to the bones in the ankle, arm, fingers, toes, and face. Often these injuries result from a hard slide into a base, a collision with another player, a diving attempt by player to field a ball, or being struck by a pitched or batted ball.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Pain in or over the affected bone
- Swelling and tenderness to touch
- Deformity
- Bruising (typically develops after a period of time)
- Loss or limited motion or ability to bear weight

### **Treatment**

- Stabilize the bone (splint or physically hold the area)
- Cover any open wounds with a sterile dressing and control bleeding
- Rest – remove player from game
- Ice – apply ice pack to affected area
- Compression – apply ace wrap to limit swelling and pain
- Elevation – to limit swelling and pain
- Transport to MD or Emergency Room ASAP.

**Dislocations** are injuries to joints that cause the joint to lose its ability to move. Common dislocations are those joints in the fingers, the ankle and patella (kneecap).

### **Signs and Symptoms**

Pain in or over the affected joint  
Swelling and tenderness to touch  
Deformity  
Loss or limited motion or ability to bear weight  
Tingling or numbness in area distal to injury

### **Treatment**

Stabilize the injury (splint or physically hold the area)  
Rest – remove player from game  
Ice – apply ice pack to affected area  
Compression – apply ace wrap to limit swelling and pain  
Elevation – to limit swelling and pain  
Transport to MD or Emergency Room ASAP.

## **Bleeding and Open Wounds**

Open wounds either take the form of a laceration that results from a sharp object, like a cleat on a shoe, or an abrasion, that is a scraping injury typically resulting from contact with turf when sliding or diving.

**Lacerations** are cuts or jagged tears in the skin that can either be deep or superficial. Deep lacerations and those to the head and face often bleed quite a bit.

### **Treatment**

- Control bleeding – apply sterile bandage and direct pressure to site
- Ice – apply ice pack to affected area – this can help slow bleeding and reduce pain
- Compression – apply compression dressing after bleeding is controlled
- Elevation – to limited swelling and pain
- Transport to MD or Emergency Room if suturing is required.

**Abrasions** are superficial skin injuries – a.k.a. raspberries, typically caused by sliding or diving on the ground or infield. The treatment is essentially the same as for lacerations with one additional word to the wise –

### **CLEAN THE WOUND**

The biggest problem with abrasions is the potential for infection. Cleansing the wound as soon as possible with soap and water and applying a sterile bandage to prevent the wound from contamination can prevent this. If infection results (pain, swelling, yellow discharge), see MD.

## **Head Injuries**

Helmets are designed to prevent serious head injuries but that does not mean they are 100% protection. Anyone who has been hit by a fastball in the helmet knows this. Head injuries can and will occur despite helmets. Here are some signs to watch for and things to consider when dealing with head injuries. Any head injury that results in a “change in the level of consciousness” should be considered significant. Changes in the level of consciousness can occur immediately after the injury or days later.

Things to look for commonly referred to as *Head Injury Precautions* include:

- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Unconscious or delayed responsiveness to voice or physical stimulus

Other signs and symptoms to watch for:

- Nausea / vomiting
- Dizziness or blurred vision
- Unstable balance / gait
- Unequal pupils

### **Treatment**

***If unconscious – DO NOT MOVE – CALL 9-1-1***

Keep player warm

Watch for vomiting

**SERIOUS HEAD INJURIES MAY ALSO INDICATE NECK/SPINE INJURY**

***If conscious*** – watch for level of consciousness changes – check player every 15 minutes

- Remove player from game
- Get player out of the sun Ice to any contusion
- Do not give fluids unless stable for 30 minutes

Any head injury that results in a change in the level of consciousness should be evaluated by a physician and head injury precautions communicated to parents or caregivers.

### **Heat Related Problems**

Under normal conditions a healthy body can manage exertion in high temperatures by perspiring. As long as fluids are maintained and exposure is not prolonged, most of us can cope. When the conditions include little breeze and high humidity, the normal control mechanisms may fail resulting in either Heat Exhaustion or Heat Stroke.

**Heat Exhaustion** can occur after excessive perspiration is combined with inadequate fluid intake. The best way to prevent heat exhaustion is to simply replace fluids and electrolytes by drinking water, Gatorade, or diet soda. If heat exhaustion should develop the following symptoms often present suddenly.

#### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Dizziness, lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Rapid breathing and heart rate
- Cool, clammy skin
- Pale skin color
- Abdominal or other large muscle cramps

#### **Treatment**

- Remove player from sun – put in the shade or air conditioned area
- Allow player to lay down, slightly elevate feet and legs
- Loosen any restrictive clothing
- Provide cool water, Gatorade, or diet soda in small, frequent drinks
- Watch for any changes in players level of consciousness If confusion / disorientation develop – CALL 9-1-1

**Heat Stroke** is a medical emergency. It can develop after someone displays symptoms of heat exhaustion or may present without warning.

#### **Signs and Symptoms**

- Changes in level of consciousness (similar to head injuries)
- Red colored skin
- Hot, dry skin
- Rapid breathing and heart rate
- Seizures or convulsions can develop

#### **Treatment**

- CALL 9-1-1
- Remove player from sun – put in the shade or air conditioned area
- Remove outer clothing
- Apply cool, moist compresses or towels, spray with water
- Fan with papers, scorebook, whatever