

2013

REVIEW

AUGUST



Your Partner in Health

Partnering with schools for a safe sports experience

It may officially be summer according to the calendar, but certain activities alert us that fall will be here soon. The Detroit Lions have officially opened practice for the 2013 season and young athletes across the state have begun practice for the athletic programs they'll be involved in when school starts. To help our local athletes be both successful and safe during these endeavors, Port Huron Hospital Physical Therapy's certified athletic trainers are taking the field right alongside the athletes at area high schools and at SC4. Athletic programs help our students learn the importance of having healthy bodies and team spirit. I'm proud of our contribution to this process.

Thomas DeFauw, President and Chief Executive Officer

HOSPITAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS

'TAKE THE FIELD'

Sports participation is on the rise among our nation's youth, and that's a good thing, as sports can contribute to a fit body and positive self-esteem. However, as area athletes suit up this year, Port Huron Hospital is encouraging them to focus on something more valuable than winning -- their health. Port Huron Hospital has teamed with the Port Huron Area Schools and St. Clair County Community College to provide the expertise of highly qualified certified athletic trainers to help ensure students have a safe, positive sports experience.

According to Todd May, Director of Port Huron Hospital Rehabilitation Services which includes the four Port Huron Hospital Physical Therapy outpatient locations, the focus of the partnership between the hospital and the schools is three-fold:

1. Prevention. Providing guidance in conditioning reduces the risk of injury.

2. Assessment. Port Huron Hospital athletic trainers provide on-field injury assessment, and after evaluating the injury, make recommendations on whether a player can continue in the game, and/or needs further medical testing.

3. Post-injury follow-up. If an injury does occur, Port Huron Hospital athletic trainers work with the parents, physician and coaches to assure the student athletes receive appropriate treatment so they can safely return to competition.

While most of us are familiar with sports injuries involving bones, ligaments and tendons, a rising concern is with head trauma and concussion. To better assess head injury, the hospital's athletic trainers, in conjunction with Orthopedic Associates, have provided concussion monitoring for the past two years. Using the "Impact" computer program, the trainers coordinate baseline testing to measure cognitive functioning on all athletes. Then, if a head injury occurs, they can compare the student's post-injury function to the baseline. This helps facilitate accurate participation restrictions and guides treatment.

Another concern is heat-related illness and injury. Starting this month, the trainers will conduct temperature and humidity

monitoring to assess and recommend changes during practice, such as more water and rest breaks or even canceling outdoor practice when it might be dangerous.

"Our trainers are an important part of the experience and a valuable asset to the coaching staff," says Todd. "Look for them on the sidelines during home games or on premises during multiple sports events."

TO PREVENT SPORTS INJURIES, THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS RECOMMENDS:

- Taking at least one day off per week to allow the body to recover
- Always wearing the right gear that's properly fitted
- Strengthening muscles through proper conditioning
- Increasing flexibility through stretching exercises before and after games and practices
- Taking breaks during practice and games to reduce injuries and prevent heat illness
- Stopping the activity if there is pain



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