

Back into Action:

A Coach's Guide to Putting a Player back in the Game

Non-life threatening injuries are a common part of sport activity. Seeking help is smart and safe and can help athletes from developing more serious problems if the injury is not evaluated and treated properly. The following guide below provides general rules of thumb for when to seek immediate medical help and when it is safe to send players back into the game.

When to get medical help:

- Injury causes immediate swelling or inflammation
- Joint feels unstable
- External bleeding needing stitches
- Suspected concussion (disorientation, headaches, vision problems, confusion, nausea)
- When normal sport activity causes hesitation, limping or pain with jumping, running, throwing or limits joint range of motion
- If a popping sound occurs with injury to a joint
- If the athlete has lost strength after injury or can't bear weight at site

When to put them “back in action” in the same game:

If the athlete can perform sport activities normally without pain sufficient to cause hesitation, limping or other compensation movements.

Coaches: keep your injured player close

- Let the athlete shadow you during recovery to keep them involved
- Be open about what players can do to help prevent injuries, such as keeping up with strength and conditioning, wearing all safety gear and following rules of play

NOTE! Every injury is different.
Not all athletes heal at the same rate with a similar injury.

Because each athlete and injury is different, when an athlete requires medical treatment, you can expect return to the field when:

- There is no limitation to range of motion
- Full strength and normal movement returns
- Cleared by treating physician or surgeon

