

## **HEADS UP!**

### **Head Injury Prevention**

Everyone shares the responsibility for head injury prevention. Two important steps can be taken to help prevent head injuries in hockey players of all ages.

Players should wear certified equipment that fits properly and is well maintained every time they step on the ice. When everyone associated with hockey comes to the rink with attitudes and behaviours that show respect for the players and the game, the ice surface will be a safer place to play.

### **Attitudes & Behaviours**

Players must practice and compete with respect for themselves, their teammates, opponents, their environment, and their equipment. Adults in leadership positions, as well as coaches, trainers, on-ice officials, league administrators and parents should make sure this happens. Here's what you can do to help:

#### **As a Player you should:**

- Be fully dressed whenever going onto the ice. Make sure your equipment fits snugly, is fastened correctly, and is cared for properly.
- Be prepared mentally and physically whenever you are on the ice. If you are tired or unfocused you are more at risk for injury.
- Be aware of your physical size compared to other players.
- Be alert when you are on the ice. Skate under control and take responsibility for your actions.
- Be honest about signs and symptoms that may indicate you have suffered a head injury. Tell your parents, coach, trainer, and physician how you are feeling.

#### **As a Parent you should:**

- Check that your child wears every piece of their equipment to practices and games and that it fits properly.
- Monitor the condition of your child's equipment. Make sure ongoing repairs are made and that whatever no longer fits or is in poor condition is replaced.
- Support coaches decisions that relate to safety. Be aware that coaches are responsible for making sure players obey the rules and that coaches will discipline players whose actions put themselves, or anyone else, at risk.
- Respect and enforce official's decisions in all situations that relate to safety issues that put players at risk.

- **Help your child be prepared for practices and games. Make sure your child arrives at the arena with enough time to dress and that they eat and rest properly before practices and games.**
- **Monitor your child for signs and symptoms that could indicate that a head injury has occurred. Make sure your child receives follow-up care from a medical doctor.**

**As a Trainer you should:**

- **Gather medical information about each player's previous head injuries at the start of the season.**
- **Write an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and communicate it to coaching staff, players, parents.**
- **Check that players wear all required equipment whenever they are on the ice and that it fits properly and is in good condition.**
- **Educate coaches, players and their parents about ways to prevent head injuries.**
- **Monitor players for signs and symptoms of head injuries. Refer a player with suspected head injury for follow-up care from a medical doctor.**

**As a Coach you should:**

- **Enforce that players do not step onto the ice without full equipment.**
- **Check the ice surface for safety and rough patches with holes, especially close to the boards.**
- **Make sure the players are properly warmed up for practices and games so they will be alert.**
- **Teach skills in a progression from simple to complex and make sure that practices are suitable for their age, experience, maturity and fitness of your players.**
- **Monitor your players during practices and make sure they have enough space to avoid unnecessary collisions. Players must be supervised at all times when they are on the ice.**
- **Respect and enforce all safety related decisions made by the officials and medical personnel.**
- **Make sure your team has a written Emergency Action Plan and that it has been communicated to players and parents.**