

Triathlon safety

A parent's guide for keeping kids in the game.



Common injuries

Road rash/abrasions

Road rash is due to a fall where an area of skin is rubbed off. Even if you don't see dirt, the scrape can get infected. Make sure to clean the area thoroughly.

- Wash your hands.
- Wash the cut thoroughly with mild soap and water.
- Large pieces of dirt or debris should be removed with tweezers.
- If available, apply antibiotic ointment.
- If a small scrape is likely to get rubbed or dirty, apply a non-adhesive bandage. Otherwise let it air dry. Larger scrapes, or scrapes that bleed more, should be covered with a gauze bandage.
- Ice can help reduce swelling. See a doctor if the scrape is very large, contains debris deep inside, or appears infected.

Knee pain/tendonitis

Tendonitis is the inflammation, irritation, and swelling of a tendon. The most common symptom is pain, tenderness, and the increase of pain with movement. Apply ice up to 15 minutes every hour for the first day. Continue to apply ice every three to four hours for up to three days.

Hand numbness/ulnar neuropathy

This is a problem with the nerve that travels from the wrist to the shoulder, which leads to movement or sensation problems in the wrist or hand. Symptoms include numbness, tingling, burning, decreased sensation, or weakness in the hand.

Fractures

It's hard to tell a dislocated bone from a broken bone, but the basic first aid is the same. Symptoms include a visibly misshapen limb, swelling, intense pain, limited mobility, and numbness. **Contact your health care provider or 911** if the suspected broken bone is in the back, neck, head, hip, pelvis, or upper leg. Immobilize the injury, check for circulation is beyond the fracture site, and apply ice.

Swimmer's shoulder

Although most injuries occur due to the running and biking, swimming itself can lead to injury. Swimming, especially freestyle, causes the shoulder to undergo repetitive overhead motion which may compromise microvasculature in the rotator cuff. Symptoms usually are reported as pain at the shoulder during the late recovery phase and early catch phase of your stroke.

Sprains and strains

A sprain is an injury to a ligament, the tough, fibrous tissue that connects bones to other bones. This results in an overstretch or tear of the ligament(s) supporting that joint. The usual symptoms of a muscle sprain include pain, swelling, bruising, and the loss of functional ability (the ability to move and use the joint).

A strain is an injury to either a muscle or a tendon, the tissue that connects muscles to bones. Strains can be acute or chronic. An acute strain is caused by trauma such as a blow to the body; it can also be caused by improperly lifting heavy objects or overstretching the muscles. Chronic strains are usually the result of prolonged, repetitive movement.



Triathlon safety (cont.)



Sports safety

Children ages five to 14 make up almost 40% of all sports injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms. Injuries in children are best handled by pediatric specialists trained in treating skeletally immature patients.

Bumps, bruises, twists, and muscle strains

These can affect all areas of the body. Recommended treatment is the **PRICE** formula:

- P**rotect the area with a sling or crutches, if necessary.
- R**est the injured area.
- I**ce the injury for 20 minutes at a time. Do not apply the ice directly to the skin.
- C**ompress the injured area with a wrap. Do not pull tightly, as this can cut off circulation.
- E**levate the injured area above the heart.

Equipment and technique

Always wear protective gear such as a bike helmet, cycling shoes, gloves, and clothing designed for cycling. Proper technique in all disciplines can also reduce the risk of injury.

Know the road

Understanding the specific trail type and terrain on which you will be running and riding will help you avoid accidents or unnecessary stress.

Warming up

Start by running and riding at a slower, more relaxed pace and gradually work up to full speed. When perspiration begins, the muscles are warmed up and ready for a workout.

Stretching

Stretch only after having warmed up; a cold muscle is more likely to tear when stretched. Stretching after a workout increases flexibility and reduces stress on joints. Perform stretches slowly, holding each position for at least five seconds.

Nutrition

Proper nutrition before and during your workout will help you maintain blood sugar levels and keep you adequately hydrated for peak performance. A physician or physical therapist can assist you in developing proper strength, flexibility, and a nutrition plan.

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare is the premier pediatric sports medicine provider in St. Louis and St. Charles. We provide exclusive, direct access to comprehensive medical care for young athletes.

Specialists your child has access to include adolescent medicine physicians, cardiologists, emergency medicine physicians, neurologists, nutritionists, orthopedists, pediatric psychologists, physical therapists, pulmonologists, radiologists, and rehabilitation specialists. We also keep kids in the game through educational programs and supports for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic health.

For more information about SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare or to find a specialist for your athlete, call or text us **24/7 at 314-577-5640**.

Expert care for young athletes by SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital providers, **24 hours a day in the ER at:** SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, DePaul Hospital, St. Clare Hospital, St. Joseph Hospital-St. Charles, St. Joseph Hospital-Lake St. Louis, Anderson Hospital, and HSHS St. Elizabeth Hospital.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SSM Health ministries implemented enhanced safety measures, which are evaluated periodically based on COVID-19 transmission numbers. To ensure your protection and that of others, we continue to require face masks upon entry along with ministry-specific screening processes.