



Rhode Island Athletic Trainers ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUMMER CAMPS – IS YOUR CHILD SAFE?

Rhode Island Athletic Trainers' Association Urges Parents to Stay Informed

PROVIDENCE, RI (May 17, 2004) - As the weather turns warm and the days become longer, thousands of youth and high school children and their parents consider the numerous options of summer camps. Whether it's football, hockey, soccer, indoor, outdoor, athletic or just for fun, youngsters across the Ocean State flock to the annual rite of summer.....summer camp.

The Rhode Island Athletic Trainers' Association (RIATA) urges all parents to carefully examine the camp's medical planning and staff to ensure that injuries will be prevented and then treated properly if one occurs.

The typical camp will indicate what to bring, where to report and what to wear, but often do not address the medical aspect of attending the camp. If not outlined in the brochure or website, parents should inquire about the following medical aspects:

1. Who is the medical director of the camp and what are their credentials?
2. What are the credentials of the medical staff?
3. Does the camp have any emergency plan and is the staff aware and instructed in order to effectively carry it out?
4. Is the camp affiliated with a physician or hospital?
5. Who will be responsible for transporting injured campers to seek medical treatment?
6. When and by whom are parents notified about an injury?
7. How is "permission to treat" handled when seeing a physician?
8. Is my personal insurance used as coverage for medical expenses or does the camp have insurance?
9. Who coordinates medications that need to be taken by my child?

Camp medical staffs are often directed by a Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC). ATC's are skilled in the prevention, care and rehabilitation of injuries and are trained in emergency procedures. Many times student athletic trainers are used to assist the medical staff.

Camp directors and staff are also an integral part of the medical team. Prevention of injuries is a critical component in any activity. Campers should be taken through a series of stretching and warm-up activities prior to more strenuous activity prior to each session. This will ensure that the body is ready and help to lessen the likelihood of injury.

Water is the body's fuel and must be consumed in large amounts to battle the heat of summer camp. Some camps supply water, while others require the camper to bring their own. It is critical in avoiding heat illness that your child be hydrated what ever the method.

It is also important for camp staff to emphasize that any camper with a medical issue should tell a camp staffer and seek the help of the medical staff immediately. Children often do not want to admit needing help and the problem could turn more severe if ignored. Staff can help to foster an environment where injuries may be an unfortunate part of the camp and campers should not be afraid to communicate their problems.

Summer camp can and should be an enjoyable time for children to learn and have fun. Informed parents will be more apt to feel at ease knowing their children are safe at camp.

NEW WEBSITE

For more information on this topic or other pertinent topics in athletic training and sports medicine you may visit the Rhode Island Athletic Trainer's Association (RIATA) new website at www.riathletictrainers.org. You may also email them at riata@cox.net for answers to your questions. RIATA members are certified and state licensed health care providers.