

Safety Tips



It starts with Scouts.

January 2015

Use your brain—Head safety matters



Concussions are one of the most common—and one of the more preventable—injuries we encounter in Scouting. A concussion is an injury to the brain, usually caused by hitting one's head. Accidents involving a blow to the head can occur in many ways, but a little forethought can go a long way in preventing these occurrences and in correctly responding if an accident does occur.

Here are some thoughts to keep in mind for activities at meetings and during outings:

- **Look for hazards.** A hazard is an accident waiting to happen—something that may cause somebody to get hurt. Work with your youth to recognize hazards and address them. Consider the following hazards and solutions:
 - A hard, slippery floor poses a serious risk during active games. Ensure all youth wear running shoes that are properly laced and tied. Don't let youth play in their sock or bare feet.
 - Walls are another risk during games. If possible, pad the walls before playing a game. Set up boundaries for games well back from any walls.
 - Look for ice outside of meeting halls, especially on stairs. Sand, salt or remove the ice.
- **Quit while you're ahead.** Injuries (including head injuries) are more likely to happen when people are tired, and are more likely among youth when a game devolves into horseplay. Call a game off when there are signs that the youth have had enough. Leave them wanting more!



Safety Tips



- **Wear helmets** for activities on hard and/or slippery surfaces. Youth should always wear helmets when skating, tobogganing or climbing.
- **Err on the side of caution.** If somebody falls or is hit on the head and you suspect a concussion, react appropriately. Stop the activity and encourage the person to rest and ice his or her head to prevent swelling.

Be sure to let parents know if a youth has hit his or her head, even if the youth seems fine. Everybody should be on guard for ongoing symptoms in the hours and days following a head injury. Persistent headaches, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, confusion and irritability are all possible signs of a concussion that may require medical attention.

