

Field Hockey



Field hockey is a popular sport in the United States with many female athletes participating at both the high school and collegiate level. Field hockey is considered to be a non-contact sport; however, because of the nature of the game, contact with a stick, another player and the playing surface is inevitable.

What are the most common types of injuries in field hockey?

Contusions and Lacerations

Outside of the inherent risk of sports and common sprains and strains, field hockey players are at a higher risk for contusions (bruises) and lacerations (cuts). The minimal protection that a field hockey player wears, along with a heavy wooden stick, make for a dangerous combination. Common areas for contusions and lacerations are the fingers, wrist, face, and lower legs. Contusions are best initially treated with ice, compression and elevation of the affected area. Lacerations are best treated by keeping the area clean and covered. If deep enough, sutures (stitches) may be needed for repair.

Concussion

Concussions are common in field hockey. Concussions occur when a player is either hit in the head by a stick or hits her head on another player or the ground. One does not need to lose consciousness to have a concussion. For more information, please refer to our concussion handout.

Spondylolysis

Because field hockey is played in a semi-crouched position, there is a great deal of flexion and extension done at the lumbar (lower) spine. Repetitive lumbar flexion and extension places one at risk for spondylolysis (a stress fracture of the lower spine). If spondylolysis

is left untreated, it can increase the risk of chronic back pain in the future.

How can injuries in field hockey be prevented?

- Wear appropriate and properly fitted protective gear
- Maintain proper mental and physical fitness because most injuries happen when an athlete is tired
- Develop and maintain a core strengthening program
- When a head injury is in question, do not return to play until evaluated by an athletic trainer or other sports medicine professional
- Consult a sports medicine professional or athletic trainer with any concerns about particular injuries or prevention methods