

## Wrestling

Wrestling is one of the world's oldest sports. It can be traced back to the first Olympic Games held in Greece. It is a sport for people of all sizes because rules require athletes to compete in weight classes. Common injuries include shoulder and knee injuries. Head injuries, such as concussions and cauliflower ear, also occur. Skin infections are also seen because of the close body contact that is associated with wrestling.

### What are the most common types of injuries in wrestling?

#### **Knee Injuries**

Wrestlers commonly injure their knees. Sprains of the medial and lateral collateral ligaments (MCL/LCL) occur. More serious injuries of the anterior and posterior cruciate ligaments (ACL/PCL) and to the menisci (cartilage of the knee) can also happen. These severe injuries usually require surgery for treatment.

#### **Shoulder Injuries**

Dislocations of the shoulder and shoulder instability are common in wrestlers. This is due to the positions wrestlers put their opponents in. In addition, wrestlers are prone to sprains of the acromioclavicular joint (AC joint), which is located at the end of the collar bone.

#### **Concussions**

Concussions are very common in wrestling. For more information, please refer to our concussion handout.

#### **Cauliflower Ear**

Cauliflower ear is when the skin of the ear is separated from its inner cartilage. The resulting injury may need to be drained and the ear wrapped in a casting material to retain ear shape once the swelling has

subsided. Because the injury is caused by friction, headgear is the best defense against this potentially disfiguring injury.

#### **Skin Infections**

Wrestlers can have a variety of types of skin infections. Fungal infections, such as ringworm, are the most common. However, viral infections like herpes, and bacterial infections like impetigo, can also happen. MRSA, a potentially deadly skin infection, is of great concern as well. For more information on MRSA, please see our handout.

Wrestlers can minimize the risk of skin infections by:

- Taking routine showers both before and after practice and matches
- Wearing clean clothing at each practice session
- Sanitizing mats with antiseptic solution before each practice

If a wrestler develops a skin infection, it is important that he/she sees a doctor promptly. A doctor who is familiar with wrestling is preferable, because there is return to play criteria for skin infections.

#### **Weight Management**

Proper control of diet, preferably with the advice of a dietician, is the preferred method of "making weight." It is important that wrestlers maintain their weight and do not "balloon" up and down during a season. Nutritional advice should emphasize daily caloric requirements associated with a balanced diet based on age, body size, growth, and physical activity level. Most states in the USA have adopted the 7% body fat rule. Before the season starts, a wrestler's weight is calculated to what he would weigh if he was 7% body fat. The wrestler cannot wrestle below this calculated weight.

#### **How can wrestling injuries be prevented?**

- Maintain proper conditioning and strength
- Focus on good technique and form with moves
- Practice good hygiene
- Check skin regularly, if a lesion develops seek out a healthcare professional immediately
- Maintain weight and eat a well balanced diet
- Consult a sports medicine professional or athletic trainer with any concerns about particular injuries or prevention methods

