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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **For immediate release**

Keep kids from getting hurt this summer – Physiotherapists share latest injury prevention strategies

**TORONTO (June 25, 2009)** – School's out for the summer and that means it's time to play for hundreds of thousands of Canadian children. All that extra activity also means they may be at increased risk for injury. The Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program say injuries are the most significant threat to the health of Canadian children. Whether it is team sports like baseball and soccer, or more risky activities like skateboarding or mountain biking, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association is calling on parents to be more proactive in preventing injuries in children.

"Parents need to act as the coach," says Mike Yates, BSc, BScPT, a veteran sport physiotherapist and coordinator of a teen injury prevention program in Penticton, B.C. "They need to ensure their children have the equipment, nutrition, and hydration to play safely. Children should wear helmets for cycling and skateboarding, wear footwear that matches the sport and playing surface, eat a carbohydrate based athlete's diet with minimal pop and junk food, and drink 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes in hot conditions", says Yates.

Yates adds that there are many other things parents can encourage their children to do that will help minimize the risk of injuries including:

- Training and conditioning (cardiovascular, muscle strength, balance)
- Dynamic stretching before an activity, static stretching after activity
- Practicing techniques and skills (landing a jump, cutting and pivoting)
- Rest and recovery after activity (rehydrating, re-nourishing, stretch and cool down)

Carolyn Emery, BScPT, PhD, a physiotherapist at the University of Calgary Sport Medicine Centre has done research that shows neuromuscular training helps reduce the risk of kids getting hurt. Emery stresses that injuries are not just a temporary problem; having one injury increases the chances of developing other injuries.

"Children and adolescents are developing osteoarthritis 10-15 years after some injuries, specifically major knee ligament and cartilage injuries," says Emery. "Parents can help prevent this by ensuring appropriate warm-up programs are followed. There is evidence that neuromuscular warm-up activities including balance, technical and strengthening components will significantly reduce the risk of lower extremity injuries in sports such as soccer and basketball," adds Emery. "A pre-participation examination by a physiotherapist working in sports medicine is encouraged. Such an assessment can facilitate the identification of individual risk factors for participation in some sports, particularly if the child/adolescent has prior history of injury."

Parents may also want to consider getting their children involved in sport therapy groups where health care professionals such as physiotherapists are involved in injury prevention training programs. Inquire with local sport groups, or at health clubs with certified fitness trainers. It is not too late to get your child in summer shape so that they avoid injuries and foster healthy activity habits that will follow them into adulthood.

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