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R.I.C.E. - First Aid For Injuries

- If your child suffers an injury, prompt and appropriate first aid will relieve discomfort, reduce swelling and speed up your child's return to activity or sports.
- An anti-inflammatory medicine, ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) can be used to relieve pain.
- Ask for our handout on the appropriate doses for Ibuprofen.

To help you recall the proper initial steps in first aid, remember the words: RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation)

Rest:

- Rest the injured area immediately
- Crutches may need to be used temporarily to keep weight off the injured area.
- If it hurts to move, use a splint for extra support.
- Pain is your body's message to decrease use of the injured area.
- Your child can return to normal activity or sports when there is no more pain with use.

Ice:

- Applying ice immediately to the injured area limits swelling.
- Place crushed ice in a plastic zip-lock bag with water added to make it softer or a cold pack on the injured area. To avoid frostbite, use a thin piece of material (tee-shirt) between the ice and the skin.
- Apply ice for 10-20 minutes every 2-4 hours. Stop if the area becomes numb. Numbness will usually go away after 30 minutes. Longer than 30 minutes use of ice at one time may cause more swelling or damage to the skin.
- Continue applying ice each day until the swelling is gone.

Compression:

- Immediately after the injury, use an elastic ace bandage wrapped over an ice pack to reduce swelling.
- Wrap the injured area with an elastic ace bandage. Wrap the bandage firmly and evenly, but not too tightly. If numbness, tingling, bluish color to skin or increased pain occur, the bandage is too tight.

- For the knee, start about 4 inches below knee and wrap to the four inches above the knee, so that the upward pressure pushes fluid away from the knee and toward the heart.
- For the ankle, start below the ankle on the foot. Use a figure of eight pattern when wrapping around the heel. When finished, the heel and toes should be exposed. Continue the wrap 2-3 inches above the ankle.
- Remove the bandage for several hours each evening and elevate the leg to relieve or prevent swelling.

Elevation:

- After applying ice and wrapping the knee or ankle, elevate the leg to a height above the child's waist.
- This can be accomplished by having child rest on a couch or bed with the injured leg elevated by several pillows. This helps reduce further swelling.

Heat:

- Heat will cause swelling if used too soon after any injury.
- Heat can be used after 48 hours.
- Heat will relax muscles, relieve pain and help healing by increasing blood flow to the area when used after 48 hours of an injury.

This information should not be used as substitute for the medical care and advice of your child's physician. Health related topics found on the Andorra Pediatrics web site should not be used for diagnosing purposes or be substituted for medical advice. As with any new or ongoing treatment, always consult your professional healthcare provider before making any changes in treatment or beginning any new treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office.