

DOC TALK with the Banner Concussion Center

Hello AYSA!! We hope that the new soccer season has gotten off to a great start for everyone. Here at the Banner Concussion Center we have been very busy helping to get all of the youth athletes prepared to start their seasons safely. This month, Dr. Erickson explains why it is important to have a sports physical before beginning play:

Just as adults should talk with a physician before starting any new exercise program, children need to be evaluated prior to participating in a new sport. A sports physical, also called a pre-participation physical exam (PPE), helps determine if it's safe for your child to play a given sport. A PPE is required in many states, including Arizona, and is strongly recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Practice, and the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine.

As part of a sports physical, you and your child will be asked about medical history, such as previous illnesses, surgeries or hospitalizations; chronic medical conditions; health conditions that run in your family; and any medications, vitamins and supplements your child takes.

Screening for potential causes or risks of sudden cardiac death is a key aspect of the PPE, so the health care provider will want to determine if your child has ever experienced lightheadedness, dizziness, chest pain, fainting, difficulty breathing, or trouble with allergies. The medical history portion of the PPE is very important because it provides details on trends and patterns in your child's health.

During the physical exam, your child's height, weight, blood pressure and pulse will be recorded. Posture, strength, flexibility and joint function will be evaluated, and your child's heart, lungs, and abdomen will be examined. Vision will be tested, and the ears, nose and throat will be checked.

Using information from the PPE, the provider can address any health concerns that could interfere with your child's chosen activity, make adjustments to medications, and provide advice on how best to maximize sports performance, all with the goal of ensuring a safe and positive experience for your child. Completion of the annual PPE also offers an opportunity for providers to educate young athletes about heat illness, supplement use, concussion, and other sports-related health issues.

Ideally, a sports physical should be performed by a primary care provider with knowledge of your child's history, or a physician specializing in sports medicine who has extensive knowledge and experience caring for specific injuries and illnesses in athletes.

For more information about the Banner Concussion Center, to schedule a baseline test or make an appointment with Dr. Erickson please contact us at 602-839-7285. We are located near the campus of Banner Good Samaritan Hospital at 1320 N. 10th St., Suite B Phoenix, AZ 85006. Information about the Banner Concussion Center can also be found on the Banner Health website www.bannerhealth.com