



GAA Player Welfare

www.medicalwelfare.gaa.ie



BE SAFE – GET HELP – SHOUT – DIAL 911

EMERGENCIES

A	AIRWAYS	Is chest moving? Can you feel the air being expelled?
B	BREATHING	Is air getting in and out? No blockage
C	CIRCULATION	Is there a pulse? Check at neck
D	DEFIBRILLATOR	Follow the instructions on the machine



SOFT TISSUE INJURY

R - REST

You should rest the injured area for 24-48 hours. Crutches may be needed to take the weight off an injured knee or ankle. Make sure that you know how to use the crutches properly. Use them on the uninjured side to relieve pressure from the injured side. Support a strained elbow or shoulder with a sling.

I - ICE

Apply an ice pack (e.g. pack of frozen peas or a bag filled with crushed ice wrapped in a towel) as soon as the injury occurs. Repeat up to three times a day. To avoid frostbite do not apply the ice pack for longer than 20 minutes.

C - COMPRESSION

Wrap the affected area in an elastic bandage tightly - but not so tight as to cause compromise of the blood supply to the affected area.

E - ELEVATION

To reduce swelling, elevate the affected area above the level of the heart.

SEEK HELP EARLY!

CARDIAC SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

The Medical Welfare Committee of the GAA recommends that in the context of cardiac screening all participants over the age of 14 should complete a cardiac screening questionnaire. Anyone answering **yes** to any of the questions should discuss the findings with their family doctor.

Of all the cardiac screening tools, the best predictor of sudden death risk is a positive questionnaire. There is a lack of scientific consensus on the overall value of further screening. Those who choose to pursue further screening however should be aware of the following:

- Testing should be done in a centre where ECGs/ECHOs are being reported by experienced sports cardiologists.
- There is a significant percentage that will have an abnormality which may require further evaluation.
- A small percentage may end up uncertain as to whether it is safe for them to participate or not.

1. Has a doctor ever advised you not to participate in sport due to a heart problem?
2. Do you have any heart conditions?
3. Are you taking any drugs for your heart?
4. Have you ever fainted/been dizzy during or after exercise?
5. Have you ever had chest pains during or after exercise?
6. Do you tire more quickly than your friends during exercise?
7. Have you ever been told that you have:
 - a) High Blood Pressure? b) Heart Infection? c) Heart Murmur?
8. Have you ever had heart tests carried out by a doctor?
9. Have you ever had very rapid heart beating that has begun and ended for no apparent reason?
10. Has anyone in your family died before the age of fifty from a heart condition for which no cause was found?

**IF YOU ANSWER YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS
YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR GP**



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HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION

BEWARE POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED NECK INJURIES - GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

SYMPTOMS	SIGNS
Nausea / vomiting	Loss of consciousness
Dizziness	Poor coordination or balance
Confusion / Amnesia (memory difficulties)	Poor concentration and attention span
Fatigue	Slurred speech
Light headedness	Vacant stare / glassy eyed
Headaches	Slow to answer question or follow direction
Irritability	Inappropriate playing behaviour
Disorientation	Decreased playing ability
Seeing bright lights or stars	Fitting / Convulsion
Feeling of being stunned	Personality change
Depression & Sleep disturbance	Displaying inappropriate emotions

Concussion should be suspected in the presence of ANY ONE or more of either symptoms, signs or memory difficulties.



For full GAA Position Paper on Concussion please visit the website.

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INJURY PREVENTION

GAA sports involve a considerable amount of turning and running. **To play football, hurling or camogie, you must train in sport-specific activities.**

Adequate warm-up: Best present practice suggests sports-specific activities.

All players should cool down after vigorous activities. This allows your body to recover appropriately. This provides a great opportunity to do static (30 second holds) stretches, which will increase your overall flexibility.

Rest is essential. All injuries will require some rest. It allows the body time to recover and helps to reduce overuse injuries.

Wear proper-fitting shoes, which provide adequate shock absorption and stability. Run on suitable surfaces.

Adequate hydration: Alcohol impairs athletic performance and increases risk of injury.

If you sustain the same injury repeatedly you should contact a suitably qualified Chartered Physiotherapist or Doctor.

Injuries do recur – If you are recovering from an injury, it is essential that you continue the rehabilitation advise given to you. There is no conclusive scientific evidence that the use of ice baths or hyperbaric oxygen aid injury recovery.



HYDRATION

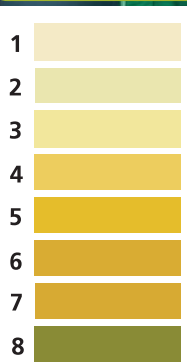
Performance may be impaired in some players who are dehydrated before a training session or game, or who drink nothing or little during exercise

Fluid Requirements

Prior to Training and Games

- It is important that you are optimally hydrated before training and games
- The urine colour chart is a simple tool you can use to assess if you are drinking enough fluids throughout the day to stay hydrated
- Urine should be pale in colour. If it is dark during the day, besides first thing in the morning, fluid intake is required. The target is to achieve numbers 1, 2 or 3. Numbers 4 and 5 suggest dehydration, with colours 6, 7 and 8 indicating severe dehydration

Urine Colour Chart



During Training and Games

- If you are optimally hydrated before training or games you should drink if you are thirsty, if not, do not
- There is no need to consume drinks containing carbohydrates during a game

After Training and Games

Drink approx 1.5 L of fluid for every kg of body weight lost in order to achieve normal hydration within 6 h after exercise

Commercial carbohydrate drinks are ideal because they provide a source of carbohydrate in addition to water

Caffeine and alcohol are normally discouraged due to their diuretic effect – increase the rate of urination



NUTRITION

BEFORE TRAINING/MATCH:

High intensity training demands a high intake of good quality food (FUEL). To ensure your glycogen stores are as full as possible when you exercise it is important to have a **HIGH CARBOHYDRATE** meal 12-24 hours beforehand.

Avoid high fat and high fibre foods as they may cause stomach discomfort during exercise.

Example Pre-exercise meals – 2 hours beforehand:

Porridge with low-fat milk, honey and fruit
 Breakfast cereal with low-fat milk and fruit juice
 Toast with low-fat spread and jam/honey/syrup
 Yoghurt drink and a scone with low-fat spread
 Pasta with tomato based sauce
 Smoothie made with low-fat milk, yoghurt and banana/mango/berries
 Baked potato with tinned spaghetti or ratatouille
 Vegetable soup and a bread roll
 Sandwich with lean meat (chicken, turkey etc) and salad
 Pita bread filled with chopped banana and honey
 Low-fat creamed rice with dried fruit
 Low-fat yoghurt and fruit

AFTER TRAINING or MATCH:

After a hard training session glycogen stores will be depleted. It can take up to 20 hours to replace these stores.

The body re-synthesises glycogen at the fastest rate when a high carbohydrate snack is eaten immediately after exercise – this should be taken within 2 hours of exercise.

Example Post-exercise meals:

Pot of low-fat yoghurt and banana
 Breakfast bar and flavoured milk
 Ham/turkey/tuna sandwich
 Sports drink containing protein
 Fig rolls/jaffa cakes and yoghurt drink
 Dinner based on a starchy carbohydrate food: spaghetti bolognese/tuna/pasta or a chicken & rice dish

DON'T GO TO BED HUNGRY

PROTEIN intake is important to help muscle building. Fruit and vegetables are great sources of **VITAMINS**, **MINERALS** and **FIBRE** and should be included in your daily diet.

At the present time there is no evidence to support the use of food supplements over a well balanced diet.

ANTI-DOPING ADVICE

- Beware of drinks containing high doses of caffeine
- Please let your team doctor know if you are asthmatic and / or taking inhalers. A **Therapeutic Use Exemption** form may be required
- Caution use over the counter cold medicines

DRUG TESTING

-Relevant to County Players only-

- You can be tested at a training session or game
- You will be accompanied by a Club/Co. Board Official
- Advise the team doctor if you are taking any medication or supplements

Check your medications (Republic of Ireland)
www.eirpharm.com

Check your medications (Northern Ireland)
www.didglobal.com/page/didenqs/choose_country

TUE forms can be downloaded from
www.irishsportsCouncil.ie

**PLAYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERYTHING THAT GOES
INTO THEIR BODY**



IF YOU TEST POSITIVE YOU MAY BE BANNED FOR 2 YEARS
REMEMBER SUPPLEMENTS MAY BE CONTAMINATED

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Produced by the Medical, Scientific and Welfare Committee of the GAA

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