

Manage acute injuries to stay in the game

Angie Ferguson
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If you’ve experienced a bad injury, you know how frustrating it can be to not be able to work out. This is especially true when training for an event. There is also a lot of conflicting information about what to do and when. Let’s clear up the confusion.

In the first few days after an acute injury, the body will go through the first stage of healing, the inflammatory phase. If you’ve had a sprain or strain in the past, you might remember the first 3-4 days are usually the worst in terms of pain, stiffness and swelling.

To protect the injured tissue from further damage and avoid any subsequent bleeding, the advice is to avoid ‘HARM’ for 72 hours.

The acronym HARM stands for:

- Heat: Avoid any heat packs, prolonged hot showers or hot baths.
- Alcohol: The less the better – that unfortunately includes that post-game beer with your mate.
- Running: Try to avoid running for at least the first few days.

- Massage: This is especially important to avoid in any acute muscle injury. It is important to avoid the above because they can lead to vasodilation, a widening of the blood vessels, and therefore increase the risk of bleeding at the injured site.
- To reduce bleeding, swelling and pain, management after injury should also focus on practicing PRICE:
- Pause: After an acute injury, such as a rolled ankle or sprained wrist, take a break and give yourself a chance to assess the possible damage once the adrenaline from the incident has settled.
- Rest/Optimal Loading: How long to rest after an injury depends on the type of injury. Seek advice from your health care provider to help determine the most appropriate time frame for a fast recovery and prevent unnecessary deconditioning.
- Ice: Applying ice after an acute injury can reduce pain, limit swelling and reduce bleeding. Ice can be applied for 10-20 minutes, using a wet towel as a barrier between the ice pack and skin. After each icing interval, take a break for at least the same time (for example - 20 minutes on/20 minutes off).

- Compression: Just like icing, compression can reduce swelling that forms after acute tissue injury. Ask your physical therapist about compression sleeves to minimize swelling. Sizing is important to combine the best compression effect without restricting blood flow.
- Elevation: Elevate the injured limb by using a sling for upper limb injuries or elevate the leg above hip height, for example, on a chair.


Once you have received a diagnosis and management plan for your injury from a general practitioner, including avoiding HARM and practicing PRICE, adjust your training program for the period of your recovery. It will most likely look quite different from the usual, but this doesn’t mean you can’t still work on your fitness and conditioning goals. Happy healing!

Angie Ferguson is an exercise physiologist and strategic intervention life coach from Fort Myers. She is a Corrective Biomechanics Specialist, USA Triathlon Advanced Level 2 coach, USA Cycling coach, has a Specialty in Sports Nutrition certification, and a PhD in results! For more training tips, contact her at www.gearedup.biz.



The first 3 to 4 days of a sprain or strain are usually the worst in terms of pain, stiffness and swelling. GETTY IMAGES

Healthcare Network addresses dental care disparities

**Dr. Douglas B. Keck**
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When we think of primary health, dental health is often overlooked or considered non-essential. With established links between oral health and overall health, routine dental care is imperative at every life stage, including for young children.

People are often surprised to learn that tooth decay (or cavities) can develop as soon as a child’s first tooth comes in. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports, “by age 8, more than 50% of children have had a cavity in their primary (baby) teeth.” Even more surprising, cavities are one of the most common chronic diseases in children in the United States – four times more common in adolescents than asthma. Yet, tooth decay is preventable.

While we are all susceptible to tooth decay, oral disease disproportionately affects underserved populations, especially children. Children at most risk are from lower socioeconomic families

where barriers to care such as caregiver low health literacy, language proficiency, dental insurance and geographic access are prevalent. Access to care is also greatly limited by the number of dentists who accept Medicaid or provide variable fees for the uninsured.

Nationally, fewer than one-in-four dentists see more than 100 Medicaid-eligible children in a year. The Health Policy Institute finds that a little over half of children ages 2 to 18 have private dental benefits, 38.5% have dental benefits through Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance program, and 10.3% have no dental benefits at all.

But baby teeth are temporary. Yes, but untreated cavities can progress into tooth infection that can spread to the jaw and face or in extreme cases, the brain. With dental decay and pain, children are three times more likely to miss school and have impaired development, lower educational performance, poor behavior, diminished quality of life, illness and more. Furthermore, lifelong habits are formed at an early age, the earlier a healthy habit is introduced, the more likely it will be adhered to in the long term. Once again, tooth decay is preventable. Healthcare Network has been

breaking down barriers to primary health services for our community since 1977.

So, as you might expect, we are committed to tackling this crisis. This month, with tremendous support from the Naples Children & Education Foundation, we are expanding our pediatric dental care program with the opening of our new pediatric practice in our Nichols Community Health Center in Golden Gate.

As with all our practices, no one will be denied care based on insurance or income status. In addition to caring for Medicaid patients, we also offer a sliding fee scale that reduces the cost of services for qualified patients. As a medical and dental home, our staff works collaboratively with patients and their families to promote overall health and improve access to preventive services.

The American Dental Association says, “dentistry is an essential health care service because of its role in evaluating, diagnosing, preventing or treating oral diseases, which can affect systemic health.”

Systemic conditions such as diabetes generally first become clear as mouth lesions or other oral problems. In fact, ac-

cording to the Academy of General Dentistry, more than 90% of all systemic diseases produce oral signs and symptoms.

Why is this important? Overall community health impacts all members of our community. Community health affects educational achievement, safety, ability to work and financial stability. If neglected, poor community health can lead to more complex and costly problems such as increased chronic disease, infectious disease and crime.

How can I help? Collectively we can improve health equity for our community by identifying those in need. Daycares, schools, social services and various non-profits interact with families long before a child’s first dental visit. These are opportunities to help families understand the importance of setting up a “dental home” as soon as a child’s first tooth comes in to current and future overall health.

Dr. Douglas B. Keck, dental director for Healthcare Network, provides comprehensive pediatric dental care at several sites and will lead the pediatric dental program at Nichols Community Health Center when it opens in mid-October. To request an appointment, call 239-658-3000.

HEALTH BEAT

Physicians’ Primary Care hires family medicine physician

Dr. Ryan Harlacher has joined Physicians’ Primary Care of Southwest Florida as a family medicine physician.

**Harlacher**

Dr. Harlacher earned his medical degree from AUA College of Medicine in Antigua. He served his residency in family medicine at Louisiana State University in Shreveport.

Dr. Harlacher is board-certified in family medicine and is a member of the American College of Physicians and the American Academy of Family Physicians. He will see patients

at the Fort Myers family medicine office of Physicians’ Primary Care at 7381 College Parkway, phone 239-482-1010.

Physicians’ Primary Care of Southwest Florida, a physician-owned and operated medical practice, was formed in 1996 by many local physicians and has grown to become the largest physician-owned primary care practice in Southwest Florida.

Medical specialties include family practice, internal medicine and pediatrics. Offices are conveniently located throughout Lee County. For more information, visit www.ppcswfl.com.

‘Brave Hearts for the Holidays’ helps grieving children

In honor of National Hospice Month, Hope Healthcare is offering a special be-

reavement opportunity designed for children ages 7 to 12 who have lost a loved one in the past year.

Designed and facilitated by Hope’s professional counselors, the free, five-part virtual series will provide kids with a safe space to share with their peers, learn to cope with feelings of grief, and discover healthy ways to express their emotions.

The therapeutic sessions will include art, music, and other creative activities, along with a chance for participants to memorialize their loved one for the holidays as part of their journey through this challenging year.



Virtual Zoom groups divided by age will be held Tuesdays, Nov. 17, Dec. 1 and 15, and Jan. 5 and 19 from 4 to 5 p.m. Children should plan on attending all five dates.

Registration is required by Monday, Nov. 2. To register a child ages 7 to 9, contact Jessica.Eastham@HopeHCS.org. For children ages 10 to 12, contact Diana.SanMiguel@HopeHCS.org.

There is no cost to participate in Hope’s Brave Hearts for the Holidays group. All necessary supplies will be included and available for pick up prior to the first session. Registered participants will receive an email link to join the virtual sessions through Zoom video conferencing.

Hope Healthcare, which includes Hope Hospice and Hope Kids Care programs, is a not-for-profit health care organization dedicated to providing care and comfort to every individual and their loved ones as they fulfill life’s journey.

For more information, call 239-482-4673 or visit HopeHCS.org.



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