Approved by NATA Board of Directors May 2004

Official Statement from the National Athletic Trainers' Association

on Commotio Cordis

According to the U.S. Commotio Cordis Registry, since 1998, 130 athletes have died from blunt force injury to the heart (*Commotio Cordis*). Of those, 70 were children ages 4-18, according to the Heart Center at TUFTS New England Medical Center.

In an effort to educate the public about the potential risks physically active youth can face, the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) Age-Specific Task Force recommends that parents and coaches take proactive steps to protect their athletes against *Commotio Cordis*.

Commotio Cordis is caused by a blow to the chest (directly over the heart) that occurs between heart contractions. The blunt force causes a lethal abnormal heart rhythm.

The following suggestions can help prevent *Commotio Cordis* and keep young athletes safe.

- Encourage all coaches and officials to become trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), automatic external defibrillator (AED) use, and first aid.
- Establish an emergency action plan at all athletic venues. Parents, coaches, and officials should be involved in these plans. (NATA's Position Statement on Emergency Planning in Athletics - http://www.nata.org/publicinformation/files/emergencyplanning.pdf - is a useful resource.)
- Use all-purpose sports chest protectors during practices and games. *(Note: NATA recommends continued research in this area because current information is limited. However, use of properly fitted, quality chest protectors are recommended to reduce the risk of injury to the athlete.)*
- Ensure all protective equipment fits properly and is used as intended by the manufacturer.
- Teach athletes how to protect themselves against chest injuries.
- Maintain an even and clean playing surface.

Links

To learn more about *Commotio Cordis,* and how you can protect your child from this type of injury, go to:

www.momsteam.com
www.teamsofangels.org
http://www.la12.org/articles/commotio_cordis.htm
http://www.tufts-nemc.org/medicine/card/commotiocordis.htm
http://www.emedicine.com/ped/topic3019.htm
http://www.usabaseball.com/commotio_cordis.html
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=21872311

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