

# ASAP news



Continuing the Little League tradition of making it "safer for the kids."

## SAFETY PLAN WINNERS FOR 2011!

*All 2011 safety plans from across the United States have been reviewed and regional finalists have been selected!*

ASAP congratulates all of the regional finalists and leagues who have received recognition for committing to improve safety for the athletes in their leagues.

Hopkins Area Little League from Hopkins, Minnesota, for implementing 2011's top safety plan in the United States. Hopkins excelled in using the LexisNexis background checks and issuing badges to volunteers who were approved by the league. They implemented the use of an AED on site while providing proper training to volunteers. Hopkins was very thorough in their training programs, procedures, and establishing safe facilities.

Each region saw growth as plans were recorded from around the country. An upward trend in 2011 is the continued focus on AED's, training, and making sure there are an adequate number of background checks being performed based on the size of each respective league. As each year comes to an end, it's likely that leagues will experience turnover in volunteers, making it more important to have sustainable training programs and broad background checks.

It's essential to look at ways to improve your league's safety plan each year as leagues across the country continue to reduce injuries.

Congratulations to all of the leagues nationwide who implemented a safety plan for 2011. You are doing what it takes to keep it "safer for the kids".

### Central Region:

- 1st – Hopkins Area Little League**  
Hopkins, MN
- 2nd – Riverfield Little League**  
Anderson, IN

**National Winner:**  
**Hopkins Area Little League**  
Hopkins, MN

### East Region:

- 1st – Clymer Little League**  
Clymer, PA
- 2nd – Thompson Little League**  
Thompson, CT

### West Region:

- 1st – Rancho Niguel Little League**  
Laguna Niguel, CA
- 2nd – Chino American Little League**  
Chino, CA

### Southeast Region:

- 1st – Bristol Little League**  
Bristol, TN
- 2nd – Capital Midwestern Little League**  
Charleston, WV

### Southwest Region:

- 1st – Oak Ridge Woodlands Area Little League (ORWALL)**  
The Woodlands, TX
- 2nd – Southern Little League**  
San Angelo, TX



# Hydrate When the Heat is On

*As the summer months continue in full-force, it's important to take proper precautions as the heat and humidity rise.*

According to the National Weather Service, in the United States, heat is the number one weather-related killer, surpassing deaths by floods, lightning, tornadoes and hurricanes combined.

## Heat and Humidity Risks

It's apparent when heat increases during the summer months, but humidity can also rise quickly. It's not uncommon to see a thermometer around 90 degrees and the humidity making it feel in excess of 100 degrees. With the heat index in triple digits, the human body will react by losing water through the sweat glands, increasing the likelihood of dehydration.

## Prepare by Hydrating

Hydrating your athlete properly will make illnesses caused by heat less likely. Over a two-hour period prior to the game, athletes should consume at least 16 ounces of fluid. During the competition, it is recommended to drink cold fluids every 10 to 15 minutes.

It's also important that water is colder, as it helps decrease body temperature quicker. Sports drinks can also be absorbed by the body like water and can provide energy to working muscles that water does not.

## Pop and Caffeine Not Helpful

According to fitness experts at Lance Armstrong Foundation, many carbonated drinks increase the chances of dehydration because they act as a diuretic, causing the body to lose water faster. Caffeine contained in drinks is also known to increase

heat production in the body quicker than normal.

If your athlete is feeling thirsty then they're already dehydrated – increasing the risks of heat illnesses. Proper hydration, beginning before a contest and through the entire game, will help keep players safe.

## Hot Day Precautions

*Check out these helpful ideas from other leagues to help your players beat the heat.*

At all levels of tournament play, any time the temperature or heat factor is above 90 degrees, all players of all ages and all divisions will rest after the second inning and fourth inning for a full five minutes.

**Palos Hills LL, Illinois**

The league is equipped with a bed and an air conditioner for those suffering from overheating.

**Robinson LL, Texas**

We switched to light colored uniforms for players, due to intense heat during the season.

**Oak Ridge Woodlands Area LL, Texas**

Overhead tarps have been installed over the stands to help protect the spectators from the heat and foul balls.

**Valley Center LL, California**

No game will be played when the temperature is above 105 degrees heat index.

**Tri County LL, Iowa**

Use a cool, wet towel around your neck between innings to lower a player's body temperature.

**American LL, Georgia**

UV exposure increases an athlete's risk of developing skin cancer. Advise players to apply sunscreen – one with a sun protection factor of at least 15 – to protect skin from damaging UV light.

**Fishkill Little League, New York**

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# Know the Warning Signs of Heat Illness

*Heat illness is one of the most common infirmities affecting athletes during the hot summer months. With the dog days of summer getting longer it's important for coaches, parents, players and volunteers to understand what causes heat illness and how to identify the warning signs.*

## Heat Rash

One of the primary functions of the skin is to protect the inner workings of the body from outer elements. It also serves as a way for the body to control its temperature; using perspiration to cool down a body that could overheat. Heat rash occurs when the pores become congested and the sweat cannot release from the skin, causing a rash.

### To prevent your athlete from getting heat rash:

- Ensure clothing isn't skin tight
- Avoid wearing heavy clothes or long sleeve sweatshirts which increase the body's temperature
- Do not use lotions or heavy creams

## Heat Cramps

Spontaneous muscle spasms when playing in hot weather are usually heat cramps. Generally affecting large muscles like those in legs, heat cramps are a clear sign of dehydration.

### It's important to identify when a heat cramp is taking place because it's one of the earliest signs of heat illness:

- There is often significant sweating coming from the cramped area
- The athlete's body will feel weaker
- Heat cramps usually begin after significant activity has been completed

## Heat Exhaustion

If sweating is unable to cool the body down, heat exhaustion can occur. Heat exhaustion stems from dehydration and can include symptoms like heat rash and cramps. Being able to identify when an athlete is yielding to heat exhaustion is important because it could progress into heat stroke.

### Check for:

- Excessive sweating
- Severe weakness
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting

## Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious form of heat-related illness and is one of the leading causes of weather-related deaths during summer months. A form of hyperthermia, heat stroke occurs when the body temperature exceeds 104 degrees. This type of heat illness is a medical emergency and is deadly if not treated.

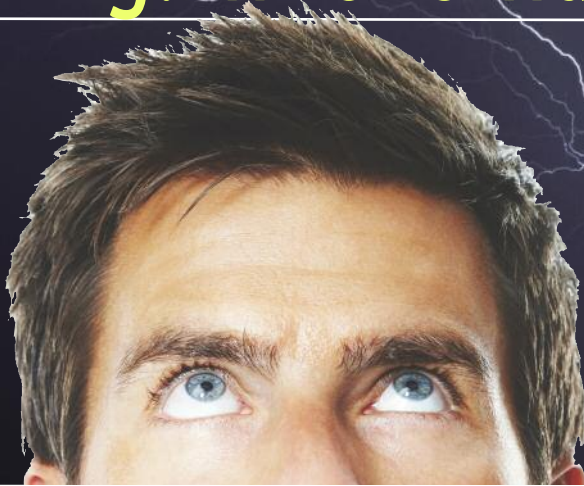
### Symptoms are important to identify early:

- Confusion, agitation, disorientation, or hallucinations
- Hot and red skin without any sweat
- Seizure, loss of consciousness, and strange behavior
- Heat cramps and rash

The summer baseball season can result in life-long memories and fun experiences for young athletes. However, in a matter of hours, without taking the proper steps to hydrate and protect each athlete, it can also result in a severe medical situation that could change one's life.

Pay close attention, hydrate early and often, and always err on the side of caution.

# Lightning! Who is Watching the Sky?



*A lightning safety monitor can save lives and prevent injuries.*

Did you know more than 60% of people who are killed or injured by lightning are struck after the thunderstorm passes? Or that a lightning strike is typically 6 to 10 miles long? Or that it doesn't have to be raining for lightning to occur? And most victims were outside during the summer months, in the afternoon and evening – primetime for Little League practices and games. That's why a lightning safety plan and monitor can help avoid a lightning injury or death.

Appendix A in the Little League rules book talks at length about the dangers of lightning and what leagues can do to prevent a lightning tragedy. They advise following the National Weather Service recommendation that those in charge of organized outdoor activities have a lightning safety plan and follow the plan without exception. Little League also advises having a lightning monitor – someone other than a referee, umpire, or coach who can devote the attention needed to adequately monitor conditions.

The National Weather Service (NWS) website<sup>1</sup> is a good place to gather information to make your lightning safety plan. You'll also want to contact your city or county officials to find out about their plans, and what other resources are available on a local level. Your plan should give clear and specific safety guidelines in order to eliminate errors in judgment.

A critical part of your plan is the lightning monitor. This is a person not involved in the game, like a coach or umpire. Their priority is to watch the sky, follow weather reports, be knowledgeable about thunderstorms, and good lightning safety practices. The monitor will be able to determine if the current weather poses a threat to anyone at your venue. They'll know your lightning safety plan and have the authority to enforce it – without exception.

## **The National Weather Service offers the following advice:**

- The best way to be protected from lightning is to avoid the threat. You simply don't want to be caught outside in a storm.
- Have a lightning safety plan, and cancel or postpone activities early if thunderstorms are expected.

- Monitor weather conditions and get to a safe place before the weather becomes threatening.
- Substantial buildings and hard-topped vehicles are safe options. Rain shelters, small sheds, and open vehicles are not safe.

It's easy to understand how people get lulled into a false sense of safety when a thunderstorm approaches – someone getting hit by lightning is not a common occurrence. However, every lightning strike has the potential to cause injury or death. The kids are taught to keep their eye on the ball; it's up to the adults to keep an eye on the sky so everyone can remain safe.

<sup>1</sup> The National Weather Service lightning safety website is [www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov)

## **Thunderstorm Facts**

- 30/30 Rule – Go indoors if, after seeing lightning you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.
- If you hear thunder you are close enough to be struck.
- A typical thunderstorm is 15 miles in diameter and lasts an average of 30 minutes.
- More than 30% of all lightning victims are struck before a storm arrives.
- Lightning causes an average 80 fatalities and 300 injuries each year.
- The air near a lightning strike is heated to 50,000°F – hotter than the surface of the sun. The rapid heating and cooling of the air near the lighting channel causes a shock wave that results in thunder.
- How far away is the storm? Count the number of seconds between a flash of lightning and the next clap of thunder. Divide this number by 5 to determine the distance to the lightning in miles.

# CHECKLIST: TOP FIVE TRAVEL TIPS

Whether you're on the road for tournaments or pleasure, short or long distance, these tips will help make your trip safer and more enjoyable.

## 1. Know Where You're Going

Have the correct address and name of the field, complex, and/or park to where you're headed. Global positioning systems or GPS' are one of the best travel tools ever, but you'll need the right information to find your destination. If you don't have a GPS or want a good back-up plan, there are many on-line map sites where you can print out a map, directions, and find travel time, too. One more tip – if you want to know about highway construction, check your state's Department of Transportation webpage.

## 2. Check Your Vehicle

Give yourself plenty of time to prepare your vehicle for the trip. Do you have enough gas? Have you checked your tire pressure? Need an oil change before you go? What about the windshield-wiper fluid? How's your spare tire – and do you know how to get to it? Do you have a road emergency kit – it'll contain reflective triangles, battery cables, a variety of tools, etc... You'll also want to have a first aid kit, if your road emergency kit doesn't include those items.

## 3. Phone

Is your phone fully charged? Do you have a car charger? Will cell service be available where you're traveling? Make sure you have any emergency numbers programmed

into your contacts, including the coach's cell, your doctor and dentist after-hours numbers, and if you're staying overnight – the place where you'll be staying.

## 4. Money

Take some time to figure out how much cash you'll need – parks and concessions are often cash only. Stopping at an ATM 'when you get there' can be frustrating and expensive. You may not find one in the area you're traveling and what they charge may be much higher than your own bank's fees. Consider taking two different credit cards. Some places will accept only certain cards, and when you're out-of-town, it's inconvenient and frustrating to resolve the problem.

## 5. Snacks and Drinks

Depending on the length of your trip, you may want to pack some car-friendly snacks and cold drinks. A small cooler is easy to handle and will keep fresh foods and drinks cool. For quick cleanups, have some moist wipes and paper towels on hand. Don't forget to bring along a small garbage sack, too.

The list above covers only 5 general topics. You'll want to sit down with your family before your next trip and develop your own list. Include things like specific refreshments, pillows, blankets, chargers for other electronic devices, travel checks, atlas, coats, rain gear, extra sun screen, games and books, etc... Traveling safe and making the trip enjoyable takes a little planning and is well worth it.



# SUNSCREEN SMARTS

*When the summer sun is blazing down on your league's Saturday games and tournaments, are your players safe?*

You've worked hard making sure the field, bases, and equipment are all up to standard. You've taught your players the fundamentals of handling the ball, but what about handling the sun? While sunburns are an immediate issue, long-term unprotected exposure to the sun means increased chances of skin cancer and premature skin aging.

Making it easier to figure out the sun-protection maze, the FDA recently announced new rules to the labeling and testing of over-the-counter or non-prescription sunscreen products. They based the changes on modern standards for safety and effectiveness and will be enforced by the summer of 2012.

## What does it mean?

Ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation is the primary cause of sunburns. Ultraviolet A (UVA) radiation contributes to skin cancer and early skin aging. In the past, FDA rules have focused on sunburn protection and the SPF (sun protection factor) value only considered protection from UVB radiation. There was no standard for UVA protection. With the new rule, sunscreens that pass the broad-spectrum testing show they provide proportional protection against both UVB and UVA radiation.

## Using Sunscreens

For your ball player, you'll want to use a broad-spectrum SPF 15 or higher, labeled water resistant, and apply 15-30 minutes prior to going outside. A 15 SPF value begins to protect from sunburns, the long-term risk of skin cancer, and premature skin aging. Sweaty players will need sunscreen reapplied often – see the directions on the label.

## In general, follow these sun-protection guidelines:

- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours using an amount about the size of a golf ball.
- Limit time in the sun, especially between 10 am and 2 pm.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants and broad-brimmed hats.
- Cover everything – don't forget temples, ears, back of the neck, and the top of your feet.
- UVA and UVB radiation is not stopped by cloud cover, so even on cloudy days, use sunscreens.

## What other changes?

There will be no more waterproof, sweatproof, or sunblock wording allowed on labels since all sunscreens eventually wash off. Sunscreens lose effectiveness when exposed to water or sweat so labeling will include instructions on how often the water-resistant sunscreens will need to be reapplied.

## How Much Protection?

The SPF value is a measurement of a sunscreen's effectiveness. As the SPF value increases protection, and to a certain extent, efficiency increases.

A SPF 15 provides about 93% protection from the sun's rays, SPF 30 is 97%, and SPF 40 provides 97.5%

protection. The FDA is considering capping the SPF values at 50 since higher values have not been shown to provide any better protection from the sun's rays.

## How Much Time?

It's a misconception that SPF values relate to amount of time you'll be protected. For example, most people believe if you get sunburn in 10 minutes without any protection and use a SPF 15 sunscreen, you'll get 150 minutes of protection from sunburn. That's wrong. SPF is a measurement of how much solar energy it takes to burn unprotected skin compared to how much energy it takes to burn protected skin. The more accurate example is if you're outside at 1 pm, the solar energy you receive in 15 minutes is equivalent to an hour at 9 am. Your player needs more protection in the midday sun than early morning.

Check [www.FDA.gov](http://www.FDA.gov) for more information on all the rule changes. Taking care of your skin this summer will take sunscreen smarts and common sense.



# The Proper Care and Feeding of Your Athlete

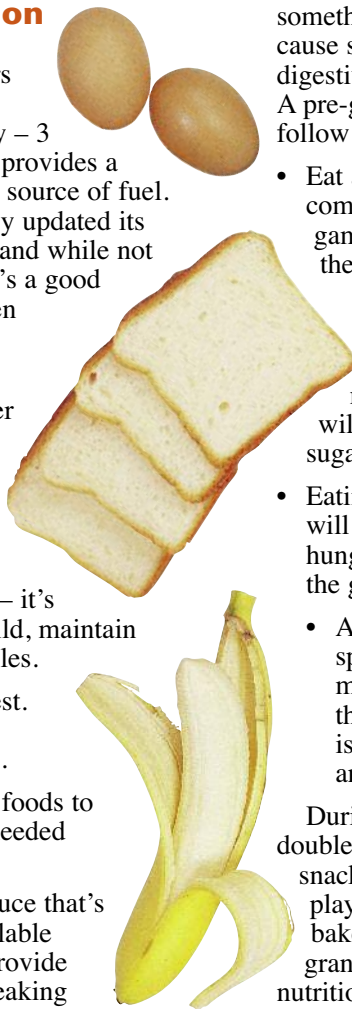
*Game schedules, tournaments, and travel make it hard to live healthy during the summer. With some planning you can keep your athlete in top form. Here are five easy steps to help ensure the proper care and feeding of your ball player.*

## 1. Daily Nutrition

Most nutrition experts and trainers agree that eating several times a day – 3 meals and snacks, provides a balanced and even source of fuel. The USDA recently updated its dietary guidelines and while not athletic specific, it's a good place to start. When planning a diet:

- Make whole grains, high fiber fruits and vegetables a part of each meal and snack.
- Provide protein with each meal – it's important to build, maintain and repair muscles.
- Fresh food is best. Limit junk and processed foods.
- Eat a variety of foods to ensure getting needed nutrients.

Shopping for produce that's in season and available locally will help provide variety without breaking your budget. Find your local farmer markets – vendors can help with recipes and encourage you to try different produce not always available in the bigger chain stores.



## 2. Training and Practice

In practice and play most ball players are active in short bursts. For this reason, a regular diet with a moderate increase in carbohydrates and lean protein during training and play will fit most players' needs.



## 3. Game Day Meals and Snacks

This is not the time to try something new that may cause stress to the digestive system. A pre-game meal should follow these guidelines:

- Eat about 3 hours before competition. The closer to game time, the smaller the meal.
  - Low-glycemic foods like whole grain cereal and bread, most fruits and nuts will sustain blood sugar levels.
- Eating some protein will help prevent hunger during the game.
  - Avoid high fiber, spicy, fried, or milk-based foods that can cause issues like gas and heartburn.



During tournaments and double-headers a carbohydrate-rich snack between games will help players stay energized. Bagels, baked chips, animal crackers, granola, fresh fruit, energy and nutrition bars, and graham crackers are good examples of quick snacks to have on hand. Don't forget to finish with a post-game meal or snack within 30 minutes. It will help replenish the body's depleted stores and encourage muscle repair.

## 4. Hydration

Becoming dehydrated can affect performance and when taken to the extreme, will affect the player's health. Some studies show following a schedule is the best method to stay hydrated:

- Try drinking at least 16 ounces 2 hours before practice or game.
- During practice drink 5-10 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes.
- Weighing before and after practice can determine how much the athlete lost to dehydration. Drink 2-3 cups for every pound lost.
- One gulp is equal to one ounce.
- Water is ideal when hydrating for normal activities, however during long sessions of exercise, sports drinks will help replace electrolytes and replenish carbohydrates.

## 5. How much sleep do they need?

According to some researchers youths aged 7-12 years old need 10-11 hours per day and their circadian or natural-sleep cycle lets them fall asleep around 8-9 pm. Teenagers, however, have a different circadian rhythm – 11 pm or later, and while most will need only 8-9 hours of sleep, some will need more. Getting enough rest will help keep your athlete alert and focused.

Good nutrition and the right amount of sleep can affect performance and health of the athlete. It's a year-round effort and it's important to accommodate training, off-season, and game days.

# Hot Day Precautions, continued

## HYDRATION

Every practice must have two to five gallons of water with ice available.

**Conestoga Valley LL, Pennsylvania**

In hot weather, buckets are filled with water bottles and ice where they are placed in dugouts for umpires. It is imperative that we keep them cool and take care of them.

**Southridge LL, California**

Ice water and paper cups are mandatory in each dugout prior to the start of each game.

**Parkway LL, California**

During periods of hot weather a 5-minute water break will be given every 30 minutes during practice. Players failing to bring water to practice will not be able to practice unless the coach supplies water to the player.

**Warren Township, Indiana**

Children must be encouraged to drink fluids even when they don't feel thirsty.

**Brown County, Illinois**

## ICE

Each team is expected to maintain a supply of ice sufficient to treat minor injuries during the a game or practice.

**Lionville LL, Pennsylvania**

Fill up latex medical gloves with water, freeze them, and use them instead of chemical ice packs. It cheers the kids up because it's a frozen hand.

**Garden City South LL, New York**

When using an ice pack always place a barrier between the ice pack and skin.

**Wallingford LL, Connecticut**

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