

THINKFIRST CANADA'S ICE SKATING INJURY PREVENTION TIPS

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Here are ThinkFirst Canada's top tips to reduce your chances of sustaining a catastrophic injury while ice skating.

TOP TIPS¹

- Skates should be snug and supportive, with sharp blades.
- Wear suitable clothing to maintain optimal muscle temperature.
- Perform proper warm-up and flexibility exercises.
- Arenas should ensure that the rink is cleaned and resurfaced frequently.
- Arenas should limit the number of skaters on the rink.
- Arenas should have a properly staffed and equipped first aid station.
- Wear proper equipment, such as knee and elbow pads, to reduce soft tissue injuries. Gloves likely reduce hand injuries.
- Ensure that supervision is provided, especially for younger and inexperienced skaters.
- Novice Skaters should follow instructions on proper ice-skating techniques and the use of protective gear, including a helmet.
- Arenas should consider a ban on alcohol sales on rink premises. Do not allow visibly intoxicated patrons to enter the skating rink and remove any patrons who become visibly intoxicated.



SKATE CANADA'S SPIN ON HELMET USE²

Skate Canada Clubs and Skating Schools:

- offering a CanSkate program must ensure all participants (including adults) up to and including Stage 5, must wear a CSA approved hockey helmet while on the ice.
- must ensure this policy is enforced during all skating activities, including competitions, carnival days or any other on ice activities for this level of skater.
- may expand the use of CSA approved hockey helmets in their club as they see fit. Anyone lacking good control/balance when skating forward, backward and has difficulty stopping, as well as maneuvering around obstacles on the ice, must wear a CSA approved hockey helmet.
- ❖ This policy is a minimum standard. Sections, at their discretion, may impose a higher standard which all clubs and skating schools within the sections' boundaries must adopt and implement.

During *competitions* or *test days*, deductions will not be applied to skaters (beyond Stage 5) that wear a CSA approved hockey helmet.

CanSkate³ is... Skate Canada's flagship learn-to-skate program designed for beginners of all ages, which teaches skating fundamentals that are organized into the following stages of learning:

- Stage 1 - Balance
- Stage 2 - Glide Forward
- Stage 3 - Glide Backward
- Stage 4 - Edges
- Stage 5 - Power
- Stage 6 - Speed
- Stage 7 - Pre-Preliminary (Optional)

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Before you Play & Return to Play!



ICE SKATING INJURIES IN CANADA⁴

- Ice skating injuries accounted for 10.4% of ice and snow sports and activities in children 5 years and up in 2000-02, with 84% of the injuries occurring to children and youth 5-14 years of age.
- The most common injuries were fractures (32.4%). Head injuries (minor closed head injuries, concussions and intracranial injuries) accounted for 9.3% of ice skating related injuries.

ACCORDING TO THE THINKFIRST-TATOR (2008)¹ STUDY...*did you know that:*

- ice skating is a relatively safe sport with only 1.5 participants out of 100,000 sustaining a catastrophic injury.
- despite the fact that participation rates between males and females were about equal, males were more likely to incur injuries.
- those below the age of 20 accounted for 41.1% of all catastrophic injuries recorded.
- of the catastrophic injuries recorded in the four year study period, brain and spine injuries made up 88% of the total.

Falling for Ice Skating in Ontario⁵

- Falls due to ice skating is a common injury in Ontario.
- In 2004-05, there were 5,102 emergency department visits and 283 hospitalizations due to ice skating related falls.
- Males accounted for 54% of emergency department visits and 59% of hospitalizations.
- Injured males and females seen in emergency departments were 9-17 years old, and 10-12 years old for those hospitalized.
- Reported injuries for emergency department visits were to the upper limb (47%), lower limb (21%), and head or neck (21%). Forearm or leg fractures, and cuts to the head or face were the most frequent injuries.
- Reported injuries for hospitalizations were to the lower limb (56%), upper limb (31%) and head (7%). Lower leg fractures were most common, followed by forearm fractures.

Risk Factors to Consider¹

The risk of injury may increase when:

- insufficient time is spent **properly conditioning** and warming up muscles
- there is a lack of protective **equipment** worn
- there is low ambient **temperature**
- the **ice surface** is in poor condition (e.g. rutted or slushy ice)
- collisions occur because of **crowded rinks**
- there is a lack of **supervision**

DID YOU KNOW?

- Males are injured more frequently than females, as they may engage in more risky or reckless behaviour.
- Most injuries involve those below the age of 20.
- Increased experience results in a decrease in injury incidence.

References:

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2. Skate Canada. www.skatecanada.ca.
3. Skate Canada. Skate Canada: Programs. www.skatecanada.ca/Development/ProgramsSchedules/CanSkate/tabid/4261/language/en-US/Default.aspx.
4. Health Surveillance and Epidemiology Division (Public Health Agency of Canada). Injuries Associated with Ice and Snow Sports and Activities: Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) database, 2000-2002, Ages 5 years and older, 25,057records.
5. Ice Skating Falls. Ontario Injury Compass, SmartRisk . January 2007, 4(1).