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Get Kids Moving with Plastic Safety Gear



Toronto, ON, May 25, 2012 – Doctors everywhere are urging kids to get off the couch and onto the sports field. Public health officials encourage parents to teach their children early the value of exercise and how it can help lead to a healthier life.

But before parents rush their kids onto the soccer field or the baseball diamond, they should stop and review the importance of safety gear. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 40% of child and youth injuries are sports and recreation related. That number can be reduced with the proper use of innovative safety gear, much of which is made possible by plastics.

Helmets are often the most important part of children's safety gear. Although helmet designs vary widely based on the sport, they are typically made with a hard, crack-resistant outer shell of injection-molded plastic, such as ABS, and plastic foam pads – often polyurethanes – underneath. These materials are designed to spread the force of impact over a greater area of the head. Helmets need to fit correctly to really do their job – a child's head should fit snugly, and the helmet shouldn't wiggle much or move around.

To help protect against eye injuries, experts recommend protective eyewear made from polycarbonate, a lightweight plastic that stands up to blunt force and is shatter-resistant. Eye care professionals also can fit children with sports-friendly prescription eyewear.

And for many sports – skateboarding, soccer, field hockey, volleyball and more – kids should wear a combination of guards to protect their knees, wrists, elbows and shins. The strong plastics in this protective gear help avoid injuries by absorbing and deflecting the impact of a stray ball, accidental fall or collision with another athlete.

By making sure kids have the proper safety gear, parents can help reduce the risks of injuries and trips to the emergency room. Tell your kids: no gear, no game. And that should go for mom and dad, too.

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The Canadian Plastics Industry Association is the national voice of Canada's plastics industry, representing the interests of processors, material suppliers, equipment manufacturers and brand owners across the country.

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