**Box 20.4**

**SPORTS-INJURY PREVENTION: YOUTH**

Definition: Reduce the risk for sports-related injury in young athletes.

Activities:

- Encourage general fitness as prerequisite to participation in sports.
- Encourage modification of game rules according to age and ability of participants.
- Inform parents of the differences between recreational and organized competitive sports.
- Assist athlete in finding a sport that is a good fit with interests and abilities that will promote the development of lifelong fitness behaviors.
- Assist parents and athletes to set realistic goals for participation.
- Provide resources for parents, athletes, and coaches concerning the psychosocial aspects of sports involvement.
- Encourage appropriate matching of competitors by age, weight, and stage of physical maturation.
- Monitor compliance with safety rules.
- Monitor field of play for safe playing conditions.
- Monitor proper use and condition of safety equipment.
- Encourage appropriate supervision for training, recreation, and competitive events.
- Monitor sports physicals to ensure they are complete before participation.
- Encourage use of warm-up and cool-down activities to prevent injuries.
- Use certified athletic trainers for competitive sports at the junior and senior high school levels.
- Ensure medical coverage at competitive sporting events, as appropriate.
- Develop an emergency plan in case of serious injury.
- Coordinate preseason seminars for athletes, families, and coaches to increase awareness of injury prevention.
- Collaborate with other professionals in planning programs related to injury prevention.
- Inform parents and athletes of steps they can take to prevent injuries.
- Inform parents and athletes of signs and symptoms of overuse injuries, dehydration, heat exhaustion, use of performance-enhancing drugs, eating disorders, menstrual dysfunction, and stress.
- Collect data on injury type, rate, treatment, and referrals.
- Monitor the long-term health of athletes.
- Monitor return of injured athletes to participation to prevent reinjury.
- Provide emotional support for athletes experiencing injury.
- Arrange for coaches to get annual CPR and first-aid training.
- Communicate with coaches the importance of emphasizing “fun” in sports.
- Ensure that coaches are well informed of normal childhood development and the physical, emotional, and social needs of children.

(continued)
Box 20.4 (Continued)

- Communicate information about special healthcare concerns of individual athletes, as appropriate.
- Develop oversight groups to ensure education of school and volunteer coaches.
- Inform parents of qualifications and behavior expected of coaches.
- Encourage parents to become involved in their children’s sports programs.
- Monitor athletes for sports-related stress and provide referrals for athletes with emotional/psychosocial concerns.
- Teach relaxation techniques and coping strategies to athletes, coaches, and parents.
- Advocate for the health of young athletes.

Source: Adapted from Dochterman and Buledhek (2004, pp. 667–668).