Safety Check: Proper Equipment
Presented by, Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center

Whether your lil diehard has just joined their local Bruins Academy Learn to Play program for their first year on the ice or your experienced teen is playing on their high school team, having the proper safety equipment for hockey is imperative for a long, fun career.

The following are examples of proper equipment and why your child needs each of them:

- **Helmet** – The most important piece of protective equipment for any hockey player is their helmet, safeguarding the head, face, and (to a certain extent) brain against impacts of all sorts. If your child’s helmet does not fit correctly they run the risk of suffering a serious injury, such as a skull fracture or concussion. A correctly sized helmet should fit snugly meaning that the helmet moves with the player's head but isn't so tight that it's uncomfortable or causes pain. All youth and school leagues through college require players to wear a cage or full face shield to protect their face and eyes from injury.

- **Skates** – Skates should be the correct size which is typically 1 to 1 ½ sizes smaller than your child’s regular shoe size. A properly fitting skate, when laced and tightened correctly, will provide ankle support and protection. Having skates that are not the right size can cause foot pain and lead to injury. Before your child steps on the ice, make sure their skates are properly sharpened.

- **Mouthguard** – Project your child’s teeth, and jaw with a mouthguard to lessen the chances of injury. A mouthguard acts as a shock absorber to decrease the impact of a hit to the mouth from a puck, stick, or fall. Broken and missing teeth are not only extremely painful, but they can also be quite costly to repair.

- **Gloves** – A proper fitting set of hockey gloves is crucial for protecting your child’s hands and forearms during play. Personal preference often comes into play when selecting glove sizes, however, a good rule of thumb is to measure from the base of your child’s palm to the tip of their middle finger in inches and then double that number. Correctly sized hockey gloves leave no part of the lower arm exposed—the cuff of the gloves should extend to the bottom of the elbow pads.

- **Padding** – All hockey players are also required to wear shoulder pads, elbow pads, shin pads, and hockey pants. These pads are all specifically designed to protect individual areas of the body from impact. These pads should all fit snugly without restricting your child’s movement.

For each newsletter, Floating Hospital for Children will provide tips to help you keep your son or daughter safe on the ice. Learn more at floatinghospital.org