
Blog Post Title: A Playground Safety Checklist for Your Mini Olympian

Do you really need a playground safety checklist?

It's a joy to watch your children run, jump, climb, slide, and whatever else they do on the playground. Sometimes, though, it seems like they're trying out for a child's version of the Olympics.

It can be nerve-wracking to watch them, and even more nerve-wracking if you have to take them in for a serious injury. According to the CDC, more than 200,000 children age 14 and younger are sent to the emergency room each year in the U.S. for playground-related injuries. And, approximately 45% of those are "severe," which includes fractures and other injuries.

Let's try to avoid that if we can (even if your mini Olympian is determined to defy gravity). Our checklist should help you avoid going in altogether. But, if you must go in, read all the way to the bottom to learn how HealthPartners' [orthopedic urgent care](#) can save you time and money—as well as provide excellent care for your child.

The playground safety checklist

Is this playground right for your child?

Playgrounds should be built for three different age groups: infants and toddlers under 2, preschoolers from 2 to 5, and school-age kids from 5 to 12. Some playgrounds post signs telling parents what ages should play there. Look for them.

Most playground injuries result from a fall.

Choose playgrounds (or build them) with soft ground—wood chips, rubber surfacing, or sand—to cushion the inevitable fall. Then, make sure raised platforms and ramps have guardrails or barriers.

Don't trip!

Don't tie dog leashes, jump ropes, etc. to objects in a playground; running children could trip on them. Then, fix other areas where children might trip, such as roots, uneven concrete, or rocks.

Watch your head!

Children's heads can get stuck if they're not careful. Remove bicycle helmets because they can get stuck in equipment, and check for spaces where your child's head might get stuck. Spaces should be smaller than 3.5 inches or larger than 9 inches in length and width.

Does the playground look safe?

Some playgrounds need maintenance. Don't allow your child to play if there are broken structures. Also, check for items that might have been left on a playground by teenagers or adults, or perhaps blown in from a recent storm.

Check your child's clothing.

Drawstrings, chords, or scarves should be seen to before your child goes to the playground because they can get caught and cause accidents or strangulation.

Be present.

Children under five and those with certain health problems should always be supervised. Aside from that, use your best judgement, and remember that most injuries happen because of a fall.

"I used the checklist but my mini Olympian ***still*** injured themselves."

It happens. No matter how excellent and well-informed a parent you are, you can't always prevent something serious from occurring, like a fracture, a sprain, or other injuries. But, you're in luck because HealthPartners' [orthopedic urgent care](#) is here to provide you with fast, cost-friendly, quality care.

HealthPartners' orthopedic urgent care, also known as TRIA, doesn't require appointments. So, you can just walk in any day of the week, from 8AM to 8PM, and it's billed at the same rate as an office visit. So, not only will TRIA save you time and money, TRIA is the only walk-in orthopedic urgent care in Minnesota whose regular staff are exclusively fellowship-trained primary care sports medicine physicians. Further, TRIA physicians have access to physical therapy, hand therapy, pain specialist, imaging, scans, and orthopedic surgeons as needed. This access to a wide-range of medical services helps us provide you with the comprehensive, convenient care you need.

Stay safe out there.

We hope your mini Olympian stays safe, but we're here for you if you need us.

Share this post so other parents see the checklist, or leave a comment below with your thoughts.