



Global **First Aid**
Reference Centre



WORLD FIRST AID DAY

FIRST AID AND SPORTS

Ready, Set, Respond
SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

CONCEPT NOTE
2024

World First Aid Day - on Saturday 14 September 2024

First Aid and Sports

IFRC Global First Aid Reference Centre / WFAD Concept note / Paris - Geneva / March 2024

Introduction:

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has been the largest network providing first aid for over a century, with the aim of reducing human suffering and promoting peace around the world. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) works with its 192 member National Societies to respond to emergencies globally, providing help without any bias or discrimination. The [Global First Aid Reference Centre \(GFARC\)](#), centre of excellence of the IFRC, was created to collaborate and provide support to the National Societies and make people and communities more resilient through first aid education and services. Every year, the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies **train millions in life-saving first aid techniques**.

The ability to provide first aid is a basic right for all individuals. By empowering each person to become a potential life-saver, citizens act as the first link in the Chain of Survival Behaviors. The expansion of first aid education and practices not only enhances community self-reliance but also strengthens the community's strategy in emergency response. As part of the IFRC's Vision2030 and broader developmental objectives, first aid is repositioned at the heart of the actions of the Movement. The aim is to reduce the impact of daily accidents and disasters, prevent fatalities and illnesses, and strengthen the capacities of local communities and civil society.

The World First Aid Day (WFAD) is celebrated annually on the second Saturday in September with the goal to emphasize on the importance of accessible first aid knowledge. It also provides a platform for Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, along with other organizations, to showcase their role in providing top-tier first aid training and expertise, ultimately saving lives across the globe.



(WFAD Celebrationn 2023 - Japanes Red Cross Society)

Theme overview:

The upcoming World First Aid Day 2024, will focus on the theme of:

First Aid and Sports

Sports are not only a source of joy and entertainment but also an arena where individuals challenge their physical limits, foster camaraderie, and promote community engagement. However, amidst the excitement of athletic pursuits, there lies the potential for injuries and medical emergencies. Hence, the theme for the 2024 World First Aid Day aims to spotlight the critical intersection between first aid and sports.

This chosen theme highlights the critical role that first aid can play in sporting environments, ensuring the safety and well-being of athletes, spectators, and communities worldwide. We're delving into the dynamic world of sports to explore how first aid is essential in this domain. Sporting events, from grassroots tournaments to international competitions, attract participants and spectators from diverse backgrounds. The dynamic nature of sports exposes individuals to various risks, including sprains, fractures, concussions, and cardiac emergencies. Therefore, integrating first aid education and resources into the sports landscape is essential in ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, can enjoy sports safely.

The 2024 WFAD theme includes all age groups; children, adults and older adults.

Children: Learning first aid for children is not only essential for their general well-being but also directly correlates with their participation in sports activities. Children, being naturally energetic and adventurous, are prone to accidents and injuries, especially during sports and recreational activities. Equipping children with basic first aid skills ensures that they are not only prepared to respond to injuries they might encounter themselves but also enables them to assist their peers in case of emergencies. Moreover, instilling first aid knowledge at a young age fosters a sense of responsibility and safety awareness, promoting a culture of care and support within sports communities. By integrating first aid education into children's sports programs, we not only enhance their safety but also empower them to become active participants in creating safer environments for themselves and others.

Adults: Learning first aid for adults is absolutely crucial, especially in the realm of sports, where injuries and accidents occur with heightened frequency, particularly among amateur activities, stemming from a combination of factors such as lack of formal training and inadequate safety precautions. Acquiring first aid skills enables adults to respond effectively to these incidents, providing immediate care until professional medical assistance arrives. This knowledge of first aid fosters a culture of confidence, ensuring that individuals can enjoy their athletic pursuits with greater feeling of security. Furthermore, in team sports, where collaboration and support are paramount, adults with first aid training can play a pivotal role in promoting a safe and supportive environment for their teammates, enhancing the overall experience of participation in sports.

Older adults: Learning first aid for seniors is of utmost importance concerning their engagement in sports and physical activities. As individuals age, they may become more susceptible to certain health issues and injuries, such as falls, muscle strains, or heart-related emergencies, especially during sports

participation. Therefore, acquiring first aid skills tailored to the specific needs of seniors is essential for ensuring their safety and well-being in sports settings. By equipping seniors with the knowledge and ability to respond effectively to potential injuries or medical emergencies, they can continue to enjoy the physical and social benefits of sports participation while minimizing the risks associated with their age-related vulnerabilities. Moreover it's essential to take proactive measures to prevent accidents because even if they gradually return to activity and warm up properly, accidents can still happen due to various factors such as age-related changes in physical abilities, decreased flexibility, and slower reaction times. Therefore, it's crucial to prioritize prevention to minimize the risks. Integrating first aid education into seniors' sports programs promotes a sense of empowerment and independence.

Key messages:

The theme of "First Aid and Sports" emphasizes the importance of immediate medical attention in the context of sports-related injuries. It highlights the need for comprehensive injury prevention strategies, effective protocols, and the adoption of first aid policies to ensure safety. While sports inherently carry the risk of injuries, understanding the foundational principles of first aid is vital in responding to these situations.

Addressing the lack of comprehensive first aid policies and practices in community sports requires concerted efforts to train qualified individuals and provide adequate equipment in sports settings. By advocating for such measures, we can create a culture of preparedness and resilience that promotes safety and well-being.

➤ **First aid education is crucial for ensuring a safe athletic environment**

Regardless of age or background, everyone can play a role in promoting sports safety by acquiring first aid knowledge and skills. By teaching first aid in schools and sports programs, individuals are empowered to respond effectively to sports-related injuries and emergencies, promoting immediate care and injury prevention in sports environments. There is a need in understanding how to assess and manage common sports-related injuries. Participants, peers and spectators can mitigate risks and prevent minor incidents from escalating into more serious health concerns. Moreover, first aid training installs a sense of confidence and preparedness, fostering a culture of responsibility within the sports community. Ultimately, prioritizing first aid education in sports helps create a safer environment.

➤ **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) training are vital components of sports safety**

Accessible and comprehensive first aid training equips individuals with the necessary skills to provide immediate care, potentially saving lives. CPR and AED training are vital components of sports safety, especially considering the potential occurrence of cardiac emergencies during physical exertion. According to multiple studies, in the event of sudden cardiac arrest, immediate intervention through CPR and AED administration can significantly improve the chances of survival. Therefore, incorporating CPR and AED training into sports first aid programs is essential for equipping individuals with the skills to recognize cardiac arrest, initiate lifesaving measures, and coordinate emergency response efforts effectively. Community sports programs should prioritize first aid education to promote a culture of safety and preparedness. By providing comprehensive first aid

training to participants and staff, these programs can enhance their capacity to respond to sports-related injuries and emergencies.

➤ **Injury prevention is a key focus of first aid education in sports**

Prevention lies at the core of ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals engaged in sports activities. First aid education emphasizes injury prevention strategies to reduce the incidence of sports-related injuries. By teaching participants how to identify potential hazards and mitigate injury, first aid education supports safer and more enjoyable sports experiences. Furthermore, learning first aid gives confidence and provide a culture of safety awareness and risk management within sports which can further enhance injury prevention efforts. It empowers participants to take proactive steps towards injury avoidance and overall well-being. Ultimately, by prioritizing injury prevention alongside injury management, first aid education plays a pivotal role in promoting safer and more sustainable sports participation for everyone involved.

➤ **Teamwork saves lives**

In the high-energy world of sports, athletes push their limits and embrace challenges, the synergy of teamwork becomes paramount not only for victory but also for ensuring the safety and well-being of all involved. This fundamental principle of teamwork extends seamlessly to the realm of first aid, forging a powerful link between sportsmanship, cooperation, and life-saving interventions. Within the environment of sports, injuries and medical emergencies can occur suddenly and without warning. It is during these critical moments that the collective efforts of athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators are put to the test. It is important to prioritise a comprehensive first-aid training for athletes, coaches, referees, and other personnel associated with amateur and professional clubs.

Each member of the sports community becomes an integral part of the team responsible for the swift and effective response to emergencies. Team mates and peers trained in first aid play a pivotal role as first responders on the field of play. Moreover, the ethos of teamwork extends beyond the immediate response to first aid incidents. It embodies the spirit of cooperation, camaraderie, and shared responsibility, uniting individuals in a common mission to protect and support one another. Through the power of teamwork, we not only elevate the sports experience but also demonstrate the profound impact of collective action in preserving lives and fostering a safer, more inclusive sporting environment for all.

Objectives:

Through World First Aid Day 2024, the Global First Aid Reference Centre and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies encourage National Societies to:

- Raise awareness about the importance of first aid knowledge in sports environments.
- Encourage athletes, coaches, and sports enthusiasts of all ages to undergo training in basic first aid and CPR techniques.
- Advocate for the integration of first aid training into sports education programs and community sports initiatives.
- Promote the widespread availability and accessibility of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in sports facilities.

- Encourage youth engaged in sports activities to volunteer with the Red Cross / Red Crescent

Facts and figures:

1. Public Health Impact and Economic Considerations:

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), millions of sports-related injuries occur annually, with estimates ranging from 25 to 50 million worldwide.¹ Sports injuries are a significant global health concern, a comprehensive study by Finch et al. estimated that sports injuries accounted for approximately 8.6 million **emergency department visits** worldwide.²
- Sports injuries impose a substantial economic burden globally. Studies conducted in various countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and Asia, have consistently highlighted the substantial financial burden associated with sports-related healthcare utilization and treatment.³ Increasing public awareness and providing comprehensive first aid education are crucial steps in improving the preparedness and response to sports-related emergencies.

2. Global awareness and first aid education

- Research indicates that a significant proportion of youth sport coaches lack formal training in basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. In a study, only 42% of surveyed coaches were certified in basic first aid and CPR, respectively, highlighting the importance of promoting first aid certification among sports personnel.⁴
- Studies suggest that implementing first aid training programs in sports organizations and schools can empower individuals to effectively respond to injuries and medical emergencies, thereby reducing the severity and consequences of sports-related incidents.⁵ A systematic review by Donaldson et al. found that targeted injury prevention programs such as first aid trainings reduced injury rates by up to 50% in some sports.⁶ Investing in injury prevention and response programs such as first aid trainings has been shown to yield substantial economic benefits by reducing the incidence and severity of sports injuries. Cost-effectiveness analyses of these interventions provide evidence-based recommendations.⁷

3. Lifesaving potential of CPR and AED in sports environments:

- According to different studies, sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) in sports facilities remains a critical concern due to its potentially fatal consequences. Sports-related SCAs constitute a

¹ World Health Organization (WHO). Sports injuries. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sports-injuries>

² Finch, C. F., Kemp, J. L., Clapperton, A. J., White, P. E., & Plumb, K. (2016). Estimating the global incidence of sports-related injuries: a review of methods and data sources. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 50(18), 1180-1185.

³ Courville, X., & Akil, A. (2017). Global burden of sports injuries: a systematic review. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 51(20), 1465-1476.

⁴ Yang, J., Peek-Asa, C., & Allareddy, V. (2019). Training and first aid certification among collegiate sports coaches and athletes: a critical need for first aid education. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(8), 1395.

⁵ Eime, R. M., Young, J. A., Harvey, J. T., Charity, M. J., & Payne, W. R. (2013). A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for children and adolescents: informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 10(1), 98.

⁶ Donaldson, A., Lloyd, D. G., Gabbe, B. J., Cook, J., Finch, C. F., & White, P. (2018). Scientific evidence underpinning the ARTIC program for preventing hamstring injuries in Australian football. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 52(12), 762-766.

⁷ Donaldson, A., Lloyd, D. G., Gabbe, B. J., Cook, J., Finch, C. F., & White, P. (2018). Scientific evidence underpinning the ARTIC program for preventing hamstring injuries in Australian football. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 52(12), 762-766.

small proportion of all out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (1%-3%) but often occur in public locations with the potential for bystander intervention.⁸

- Enhanced awareness and accessibility to life-saving skills like CPR and equipment such as Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in sports environments can improve bystander intervention, reducing the risk of fatalities.⁹ Prompt first aid intervention can significantly reduce mortality rates in sports-related emergencies. A meta-analysis by Monsieurs et al. concluded that bystander CPR can double or triple the likelihood of survival from cardiac arrest in sports settings.¹⁰ According to the Resuscitation Council (UK), the chances of survival from sudden cardiac arrest decrease by 7-10% for every minute that passes without defibrillation.¹¹ In addition, communities with widespread availability of AEDs and widespread CPR training have demonstrated significant improvements in survival rates from cardiac arrest during sports events.

Communication package:

The Communications department of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with the Global First Aid Reference Centre will provide National Societies with a number of communication tools. These tools are free and easy to use. These materials and tools are optimized to raise awareness on first aid in a digital and innovative way:

- ✓ *Concept Note*
- ✓ *Official Poster "First aid and Sports"*
- ✓ *Social Media assets*
- ✓ *Leaflets on First aid and main injuries in sports*
- ✓ *First Aid Comics - Fractures*
- ✓ *Sports-themed First Aid colouring pages*
- ✓ *Activity sheet: First Aid and Sports Relay Race Game*
- ✓ *Activity sheet: Bingo on first aid and sports*
- ✓ *Online Interactive Quiz*
- ✓ *Testimonials from Athletes*
- ✓ *The IFRC Universal First Aid App*

All the WFAD 2024 communication tools proposed to National Societies will be available online in a dedicated section of the Global First Aid Reference Centre platform as well as the source files for adaptation to context and languages.

⁸ Hallstrom, A. P., Ornato, J. P., Weisfeldt, M., Travers, A., Christenson, J., McBurnie, M. A., ... & Racht, E. M. (2004). "Public-access defibrillation and survival after out-of-hospital cardiac arrest." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 351(7), 637-646.

⁹ Link, M. S., Berkow, L. C., Kudenchuk, P. J., Halperin, H. R., Hess, E. P., Moitra, V. K., ... & Hazinski, M. F. (2015). Part 7: Adult advanced cardiovascular life support: 2015 American Heart Association Guidelines update for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiovascular care. *Circulation*, 132(18_suppl_2), S444-S464.

¹⁰ Monsieurs, K. G., Nolan, J. P., Bossaert, L. L., Greif, R., Maconochie, I. K., Nikolaou, N. I., ... & Perkins, G. D. (2015). European Resuscitation Council Guidelines for Resuscitation 2015: Section 1. Executive summary. *Resuscitation*, 95, 1-80.

¹¹ Resuscitation Council (UK). (n.d.). What is the Chain of Survival? Retrieved from <https://www.resus.org.uk/library/policy-documents/resuscitation-guidelines-2015/#Chain-of-survival>.

Tips and suggested activities:

To support the implementation of the theme, we propose the following activities:

- Conduct public demonstrations of first aid techniques at local parks, sports fields, or recreation centres.
- Host workshops or webinars focusing on the theme and importance of first aid
- Collaborate with local sports clubs, schools, and community centres to promote sports safety.
- Distribute resources such as brochures, posters, and infographics to raise awareness.
- Organize first aid competitions or challenges with a sports theme.
- Host community events or health expos featuring interactive first aid stations.
- Launch social media campaigns to promote World First Aid Day and sports safety: Ask if possible to engage your national sports heroes in the celebration
- Organize public short first aid training sessions with a discount on the occasion of WFAD

CALENDAR

Pre-launch:

- Tools availability: June 2024

Launch:

- World First Aid Day (WFAD): Saturday 14th September 2024
- Activities can continue up until the end of October to combine celebration between WFAD and World Restart A Heart Day (WRAH)

Report:

- Report survey to be sent to National Societies: November 2024
- Final report published by the GFARC: December 2024 / January 2025



(WFAD 2023 – Lithuania Red Cross)

ABOUT THE GLOBAL FIRST AID REFERENCE CENTRE (GFARC)

The [Global First Aid Reference Centre \(GFARC\)](#) is one of the centres of excellence of the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies \(IFRC\)](#). Hosted by the French Red Cross, the Centre aims to harmonize first aid practices worldwide through the development of first aid tools, the dissemination of evidence-based guidelines and the provision of training of trainers worldwide. In addition, the GFARC advises and supports the National Societies of the Movement to develop or adapt their training offer to local needs. Based on the premise that every citizen can save lives, the Centre also advocates for the dissemination of a first aid culture throughout the world.

***If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact us
on: first.aid@ifrc.org***

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