

TheraCORE

Physical Therapy

16622 W. 159th Street STE 503, Lockport, IL 60441
(815)838-5070 www.theracorept.com

April / May 2010

April is **National Youth Sports Safety Month**. In recognition of this very important topic we are including information on several issues that we feel are imperative to the safety of young athletes. We hope that, as we move forward into soccer and little league seasons, you will find the message of this edition of our newsletter beneficial in your own life.



Nutritional Needs of Young Athletes

All kids need to eat balanced meals and have a healthy diet. But should that balance change for kids who play on a sports team or work out? Maybe.

Kids need to eat the right amount and mix of foods to support that higher level of activity, but that mix might not be too different from a normal healthy diet. Eating for sports should be an extension of healthy eating for life. Many "sports" foods and drinks, like energy bars, are marketed to athletes, but most don't need them to meet their energy needs. While these products don't have magic ingredients that will improve sports performance, they can be handy when kids don't have time for a healthy meal or snack.

Because athletic kids are particularly reliant on the nutrients that a balanced diet can provide, it's usually not wise for them to diet. In sports where weight is emphasized, such as wrestling, swimming, dance, or gymnastics, kids may feel pressure to lose weight. If a coach, gym teacher, or another teammate says that your child needs to go on a diet, talk to your doctor first. If your doctor thinks your child should diet, work together with your pediatrician or a registered dietitian to develop a plan that allows your child to lose weight in a safe and healthy way. Kids who eat healthy, well-balanced meals and snacks are probably getting the nutrients needed to perform well in sports. The Food Guide Pyramid can provide guidance on what kinds of foods and drinks to include in your child's meals and snacks.

Little League Baseball Pitch Count Guidelines

Research suggests that setting and enforcing sensible youth pitching and playing guidelines may help protect the young arm against future injury and may promote optimal development of pitching skill and strength.

Pitch count restrictions based on age:

- Pitchers ages 17 to 18: 105 pitches
- Pitchers ages 13 to 16: 95 pitches
- Pitchers ages 11 to 12: 85 pitches
- Pitchers ages 10 and under: 75 pitches

Pitchers ages 7 to 16 must abide by the following rest requirements:

- Players who pitch 61 or more pitches in a day: 3 calendar days
- Players who pitch 41 to 60 pitches in a day: 2 calendar days
- Players who pitch 21 to 40 pitches in a day: 1 calendar day
- Players who pitch 1 to 20 pitches in a day: No calendar days

Pitchers ages 17 and 18 must abide by the following rest requirements:

- Players who pitch 76 or more pitches in a day: 3 calendar days
- Players who pitch 51 to 75 pitches in a day: 2 calendar days
- Players who pitch 26 to 50 pitches in a day: 1 calendar day
- Players who pitch 1 to 25 pitches in a day: No calendar days



Call **(815) 838-5070** to schedule a **COMPLIMENTARY INJURY SCREENING**

Overuse Injuries in Youth Sports

The number of kids showing up in the doctor's office with overuse injuries, such as tendonitis, is climbing dramatically. Experts attribute this increase to the fact that more kids today are focusing on one sport at an early age and training year-round. All of these injuries can be linked to overuse; doing too much, too often.

Playing a variety of different sports throughout the year was a form of cross-training that was extremely beneficial to a young body's physical development. Playing multiple sports, at different times of the year gives some muscles a chance to rest while others are being worked. Kids should play a variety of sports. Young athletes need to vary their training just like pros do. All pros have an off-season where they change their training routine and rest more. While specializing in one sport, they adjust their seasonal training to allow complete recovery.

Many physicians who treat these injured kids feel that the solution is education for parents and coaches, so that they can see the warning signs and pull kids off the field before injuries get serious.

Some Tips to avoiding Overuse Injuries:

- Weekly training time, number of repetitions, or total distance should not increase by more than 10% weekly.
- Focus of sports should be fun, skill acquisition, safety and sportsmanship.
- Join only one team per season.
- Be aware of risks associated with weekend tournaments, such as heat-related illness, nutritional deficiencies, overuse injuries and burnout.
- Multi-sport athletes who use the same body parts for different sports especially need to take a break between seasons to avoid overuse injuries.

If your child is showing signs of an overuse injury, Physical Therapy will help alleviate this pain and strengthen the surrounding muscles. This will give them the tools they need for proper technique to avoid future injuries.



Encourage Stretching, Warm Up and Cool Down

Warm Up, Cool Down and Stretching are all important elements that should be incorporated into every work out

Benefits include:

- Prepares the body for physical activity
- Reduces the risk of injury
- Assists in the removal of waste products
- Reduces the effects of fatigue (including muscle soreness)

Could your young athlete have a CONCUSSION?

Concussions and other brain injuries are fairly common. About every 21 seconds, someone in the United States has a serious brain injury. *One of the most common reasons people get concussions is through a sports injury.* Most people with concussions recover just fine with appropriate treatment. But it's important to take proper steps if you suspect a concussion because it can be serious.

What Are the Signs and Symptoms?

Repeated injury to the brain can lead to swelling, and sometimes people develop long-term disabilities, or even die, as a result of serious head injuries. This is why it is important to recognize and understand the signals of a concussion.

Symptoms of a concussion may include:

- "seeing stars" and feeling dazed, dizzy, or lightheaded
- short term memory loss
- nausea or vomiting
- headaches
- blurred vision and sensitivity to light
- slurred speech or saying things that don't make sense
- difficulty concentrating, thinking, or making decisions
- difficulty with coordination or balance
- acting anxious or irritable for no apparent reason
- feeling overly tired

If You Suspect a Concussion

Here's what to do if you suspect your child may have a concussion:

- **If the injury happens while playing sports, stop playing.** Don't let your child return to play even if they say that they feel fine.
- **If there is a possibility of a complex concussion (if they lose consciousness for more than one minute, have seizures, or the symptoms last more than 7-10 days), contact your doctor or go to the emergency room.** After a complex concussion it is necessary to see a concussion or brain injury specialist to help decide whether additional tests are needed and when it would be safe to return to activity. You can get a referral from your primary care physician for this. For the first few days, rest both body and mind: Activities that require concentration and attention (like studying, test taking, or even playing videogames) may make the symptoms worse and delay recovery.
- **After the symptoms of concussion have gone away, gradually go back to being more active.** Slowly advance from one step to the next, day by day, ONLY if you remain symptom free.

Dizziness can be debilitating, and needs to be taken seriously. TheraCORE's vestibular rehabilitation specialists are dedicated to helping individuals overcome complaints of dizziness, fogginess, deficits in balance, and sensitivity to motion and/or movement. Our licensed therapists have received specialized training dealing with these issues, and will work with you to design a customized treatment plan that will help you reach your goals.