

## **Associated Pediatric Partners, S.C.**

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### **What Causes Sports Injuries Among Children?**

Kids can be particularly susceptible to sports injuries for a variety of reasons. Kids, particularly those who are younger than 8 years old, are less coordinated and have slower reaction times than adults because they are still growing and developing.

In addition, kids mature at different rates. Often there's a substantial difference in height and weight between kids of the same age. And when kids of varying sizes play sports together, there may be an increased risk of injury.

How Can Sports Injuries Be Prevented?

- Use of Proper Equipment Maintenance and Appropriateness of Playing Surfaces
- Use of Proper Equipment
- Adequate Adult Supervision and Commitment to Safety
- Proper Preparation

Overuse Injuries

Overuse injuries occur from repetitive actions that put too much stress on the bones and muscles. Any child who plays sports can develop overuse injuries, although the more time your child spends on the sport, the more likely your child is to experience an overuse injury.

Some of the most common types of overuse injuries are:

- **anterior knee pain**
- **Little League elbow:**
- **swimmer's shoulder**
- **shin splints.**
- Spondylolysis often results from trauma or from repetitive flexing, then overextension, twisting, or compression of the back muscles.

Overuse injuries can be caused or aggravated by:

- growth spurts or an imbalance between strength and flexibility
- inadequate warm-up
- excessive activity (for example, increased intensity, duration, or frequency of playing and/or training)
- playing the same sport year-round or multiple sports during the same season
- improper technique (for example, overextending on a pitch)
- unsuitable equipment (for example, non-supportive athletic shoes)

## **Re-injuries**

Returning to the playing field before a previous injury has completely healed places stress upon the injury and forces the body to compensate for the weakness, which can put the athlete at greater risk for injuring another body part.

Re-injury can be avoided by allowing the injury to completely heal. Once your doctor has approved a return to the sport, make sure that your child properly warms up and cools down before and after exercise. Sudden exertion can also cause re-injury, so your child should re-enter the sport gradually. Explain that easing back into the game at a sensible pace is better than returning to the hospital.