

FACT SHEET



PARTICIPATING
SPORTS MEDICINE PRACTICE

There are alarming trends in "professional-level" injuries among youth sports participants. Orthopaedic surgeons see two trends: the number of youth injuries is reaching epidemic proportions and youth are experiencing overuse injuries at a younger and younger age. To address these issues, the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM) and its collaborators created the STOP Sports Injuries Campaign. Armed with the correct information and tools, today's youth athletes can remain healthy, play safe and stay in the game for life.

Overuse injuries impact young athletes in the short term and often lead to long-term consequences. Using proper preventative measures such as pre-participation physicals, stretching, cross-training, hydration and open communication about pain among all participants (coaches, athletes, parents and healthcare providers) can help aid recovery and avoid long-term consequences.

It is important for everyone who plays a role in a young athlete's life—parents, coaches and healthcare providers—to put the athlete's health and safety first and to quickly and honestly communicate about issues of pain, injury and the need for proper recovery.

Youth sports with the highest rates of overuse injury:

Baseball	Dancing	Running	Swimming
Basketball	Football	Soccer	Tennis
Cheerleading	Gymnastics	Softball	Volleyball

The Problem:

- High school athletics account for more than 2 million injuries annually, including:
 - 500,000 doctor visits
 - 30,000 hospitalizations(Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Young athletes are specializing in sports (and positions) at an earlier age, with more than 3.5 million children under age 14 treated annually for sports injuries. (Source: Safe Kids USA)

Why are injuries on the rise?

- Immature bones
- Insufficient rest after an injury
- Poor training or conditioning
- Specialization in just one sport
- Year-round participation

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), participation in organized sports is on the rise. Nearly 30 million children and adolescents participate in youth sports in the United States. This increase in play has led to some other startling statistics about injuries among America's young athletes:

- By age 13, 70 percent of kids drop out of youth sports. The top three reasons: adults, coaches and parents. (Safe Kids USA campaign Web site, 2009)
- Twenty percent of children ages 8 to 12 and 45 percent of those ages 13 to 14 will have arm pain during a single youth baseball season. (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, 2009)
- Although 62 percent of organized sports-related injuries occur during practice, one-third of parents do not have their children take the same safety precautions at practice that they would during a game. (Safe Kids USA campaign Web site, 2009)