

BASEBALL SAFETY

A PARENT'S GUIDE FOR KEEPING KIDS IN THE GAME

Recent data shows 250,000 youth are injured each year playing baseball. This reference guide provides information on the most common baseball injuries requiring treatment.

HEAD INJURIES

A **concussion** is a brain injury usually caused by a sudden jolt or a blow to the head or neck that disrupts normal brain function. This can occur in baseball from a pitch that hits the batter's head or a collision at home plate. An athlete does not need to be knocked out or have memory loss to have suffered a concussion.

You may observe that an athlete with a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Forgets plays
- Has behavior or personality changes
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Can't recall events either before or after hit
- Loses consciousness

An athlete with a concussion may have:

- Headache
- Concentration or memory problems
- Nausea
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Feelings of being "in a fog"
- Sensitivity to light or noise

An athlete with signs of a concussion should be removed from play immediately and not allowed to return until evaluated by a doctor. Do not leave an athlete alone after a concussion. Call for immediate medical help if your child displays:

- A headache that gets worse or lasts for a long time
- Confusion, extreme sleepiness or trouble waking up
- Vomiting (more than once)



- Seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably)
- Trouble walking or talking
- Weak or numb arms or legs
- Any other sudden change in thinking or behavior

Most athletes with a concussion will recover completely within a few weeks of the initial injury. Returning to play before completely recovering puts the athlete at risk for a more serious injury, long term damage and even death.

ELBOW INJURIES

In young players, bones have not finished growing. Repetitive motion can cause muscles and tendons to pull on the bones at these growth sites where they are most vulnerable. Rest is the primary treatment. Prevention by following pitch count recommendations is most important. A good reference for the most up-to-date information on pitch counts is available on the Little League Web site (www.littleleague.org — under the rules and regulation changes tab).

Elbow pain should not be ignored. Rest is recommended to allow for sufficient recovery. If symptoms persist after two weeks of forced rest, a visit to a pediatric orthopedic surgeon is recommended.

ARM INJURIES

Pitching and throwing can lead to overuse injuries in the arms, elbows and shoulders. Tissue such as bone, cartilage or tendon can become damaged by repetitive motion activities. Without adequate time for recovery, the tissue cannot adapt to the demands placed on it. Symptoms of overuse injuries, also considered **chronic sports injuries**, include:

- Pain when performing the activity or sport
- Dull pain even at rest
- Intermittent swelling
- Inability to straighten the elbow
- Decreasing performance

BASEBALL SAFETY (CONT.)

SPORTS SAFETY

Children ages 5 to 14 make up almost 40 percent of all sports injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms. Injuries in children are best handled by pediatric specialists trained in treating skeletally immature patients.

Athletes should see a pediatrician or pediatric sports medicine physician if any of these symptoms are present:

- Deformity
- Limping that lasts more than 48 hours
- Soft tissue swelling that gets worse the next day despite ice and over-the counter anti-inflammatory medication
- Effusion – mobile soft tissue swelling on both sides of a joint, often easily seen at the knee or ankle
- Pain that returns quickly with activity at the next session or is not gone after two weeks of rest

How to protect your child:

- Schedule your child for an annual physical before playing sports.
- Monitor play and practice and encourage players to abide by the rules.
- Have a first aid kit handy and an emergency action plan in place.
- Keep sports fun! Remember to be positive and don't push kids to perform beyond their abilities.

Bumps, Bruises, Twists & Muscle Strains

These can affect all areas of the body.

Recommended treatment is the **PRICE** formula:

Protect the area with a sling or crutches, if necessary.

Rest the injured area.

Ice the injury for 20 minutes at a time. Do not apply the ice directly to the skin.

Compress the injured area with a wrap. Do not pull tightly, as this can cut off circulation.

Elevate the injured area above the heart, if possible.

Make sure your young athlete:

- Wears appropriate properly-fitting safety gear, free of heavy wear and tear
- Stays properly hydrated. Kids don't sweat as much as adults and need to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after activity
- Does warm-up and cool-down exercises before and after practices and games
- Gets proper rest and avoids overdoing it.

SSM HEALTH CARDINAL GLENNON SPORTSCARE

SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare is the premier pediatric sports medicine provider in St. Louis and St. Charles. We provide exclusive, direct access to comprehensive medical care for young athletes. By working with multiple specialists and care partners, we guarantee your child will get the top care that is best suited to treat their unique injury, improving recovery time and outcome.

Specialists your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include orthopedists, pulmonologists, cardiologists, radiologists, neurologists, emergency medicine physicians, adolescent medicine physicians, rehabilitation specialists, physical therapists, nutritionists and pediatric psychologists.

Partners your child has access to through SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare include SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, SSM Health

Orthopedics, SSM Physical Therapy and SLUCare Physician Group of Saint Louis University. We also keep kids in the game through educational programs and support for parents, coaches and athletes that focus on injury prevention, proper technique and overall athletic health.

For more information about SSM Health Cardinal Glennon SportsCare or to find a specialist for your athlete, call us at **314-577-5640** or visit us at cardinalglennon.com/sportscare.

Expert care for young athletes by SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital and SSM Health emergency medicine specialists, **24 hours a day in the ER** at: SSM Health DePaul Hospital, SSM Health St. Clare Hospital, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - Lake Saint Louis, SSM Health St. Joseph Hospital - St. Charles.



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