



Common Sense in Medicine

This information is based on patient interaction of over twenty-five years in the Dallas office of Dr. David Hubler M.D. Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon

Young Athletes

Kids and adolescents have many unique athletic injuries. This is because they have open growth plates in their bones.

We see injuries involving the elbow starting in Little League. Most of these problems are from repetitive throwing. Often the growth plate (epiphysis) is pulled loose from the bone. As many as 20% of 11 and 12 year olds complain of elbow problems. Rest is the key to treatment, and it is slow to heal.

Adolescent pitchers may develop damage to the cartilage coating in the elbow. They can break loose pieces in the joint that require surgical removal. They also can permanently stretch the ulnar collateral ligament to a point they end their pitching career.

The kids that are at risk for elbow or shoulder problems may have started throwing at an early age and try difficult pitches. They throw an excessive number of pitches in a game or inning. They may be on more than one team and play year-round. They may have poor pitching technique or conditioning.

Knee injuries are also fre-

quent. Knee pain can be due to an injury of the growth plate of the bones around the knee or even in the hip joint. The growth plate is a weak spot in the bone and is often weaker than the ligaments. If the injury is in the hip joint it usually requires surgery, while those around the knee can be treated with a cast or brace.

Knee OCD (osteochondritis dissecans) is an injury to the articular cartilage in the knee. If discovered early it heals with a change in activity, otherwise arthroscopic surgery is required.

The "growing pains" that kids have are in the muscles and bones, not in the joints. Treatment for these include vitamins, heat and stretching. Any episodes of swelling in a kid's joint are not normal. If in doubt, check it out.

**Young Athletes
By David Hubler M.D.**

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