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Tips on Youth Sports Injuries

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Common Youth Sports Injuries:

- Strains (occurs in muscle or at muscle-tendon junction)
 - o Excessive tension from forceful contraction and/or sudden overstretch
 - o Often called a “pulled” muscle.....technically is tearing of fibers, whether very small microscopic or up to complete rupture
- Sprains (occurs in ligaments, the strong fibrous tissue connecting two bones)
 - o Excessive tension causing by bending, twisting, or separating of two bones
 - o Graded I, II, and III to describe very minor tissue damage up to complete tear
- Contusions (occurs to skin and underlying soft tissues and possibly organs/bone)
 - o Trauma caused by a fall or direct blow from another player or object
 - o Often referred to as a “bruise”, it often results in discoloration due to bleeding caused by damage to small blood vessels
- Tendonitis-tendinosis (occurs at the tendon, the muscle’s attachment to the bone)
 - o Often caused by repetitive overuse/microtrauma from tensile loading
 - o Frequently involves the “eccentric” or deceleration phase of activity especially

- Eg. Patellar tendon landing from a jump
- Eg. Achilles tendon while running uphill

REMEMBER....

IF YOU EXPERIENCE AN INJURY THAT IS CAUSING PROBLEMS IN HOW YOU PERFORM DAILY ACTIVITIES OR YOUR SPORT, OR THAT IS STILL PAINFUL AFTER 3–5 DAYS THEN MAKE SURE TO SEE A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL

Injuries Unique to Younger Growing Athletes:

- **Growth Plate Injury**
 - Site near ends of bone where growth occurs
 - Area of sensitivity to stress of high forces from activity and loading at tendon attachments
 - Often called apophysitis
 - Eg. Osgood–Schlatters below knee
 - Eg. Sever’s at ankle–foot
 - Eg. Little League Elbow at inner elbow

Some Factors Contributing to Injuries in Young Athletes

- **Overuse**
 - Fewer multi sport athletes getting varied physical stresses
 - Year round one sport participation causing high volume of same stresses
 - “The Drop of Water on a Rock” puts a hole in the rock after enough time
 - Same tissues seeing repetitive loading without adequate recovery

- **Poor Preparation**
 - “You can only use what you bring to the table”
 - If playing sports were enough stimulus to create a training effect then all athletes would have developed equal and adequate flexibility, strength, power...etc, since they’re all playing the same sport
 -Is that what we really see?
 - Some base level of dynamic flexibility, strength, balance, coordination needed to participate safely.
 - Developed through Physical Education class

- Varied play activities
- Benefits of a structured Sports Training Program
- o Increasing challenges of moving from technology world of cell phones/Ipods, video games...etc with poor postures contributing to poor flexibility and important muscle groups that get “shut down”

**INJURED ATHLETES CAN DIRECTLY ACCESS US AT PEAK
PERFORMANCE PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR SPORTS INJURIES....
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- *Playing up and Advancing Early*
 - o Increasing risk with younger athletes “playing up” with others who may be bigger, stronger, faster...etc
 - o Advancing to throwing ball too far, shooting with full size basketball, equipment made to fit larger/older athlete....etc
 - Picture 7th or 8th grade girl shooting 3 pointers...adopting poor form to try to get the ball to reach the basket
 - Picture a 9th grade boy using a workout program obtained from a famous Division I program that trains 18–21 year olds

- *Unresolved Injuries*
 - o Avoid being dishonest about pain or inability to perform
 - Young athletes often worry they’ll appear whimpy in the eyes of their coach, parents, or teammates
 - Young athletes may worry they’ll lose their “place” on the team or starting spot if they take time off to heal
 - o Not properly addressing an injury can lead to increased risk for worsening that same injury or injuring another body part
 - Eg. Recently a high school athlete came in with patellar tendonitis that was limiting his basketball play. He had suffered an ankle sprain within the year prior and thought he was fine since the pain resolved. He actually had significant limitations remaining in the ankle that lead to his knee having to compensate or “cheat” for the restricted ankle...causing his tendonitis.

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