

Little Leaguer's Elbow

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Over the past few decades, organized sports for children have grown significantly with millions of children participating each year. Emphasis on training and competition even at the younger age has led to an increase in the number of overuse injuries.

CAUSES

Little Leaguer's Elbow is a common overuse injury seen in athletes generally 12 or younger. It encompasses all the stress changes involved in youth pitching. During the throwing motion, stress and tension are placed on the medial (inside) structures of the elbow, while compressing the lateral (outside) structures. These forces are accentuated by side arm throwing. Young pitchers are still learning proper throwing techniques and this often subjects the elbow to abnormal and increased forces. Also, throwing curve balls and other breaking pitches require more rotation of the wrist and it is thought that this increases stress on the elbow.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of Little Leaguer's Elbow include pain and tenderness at the bony prominence on the inside of the elbow. Pain is increased with forceful throwing and gripping. Early recognition of this condition allows adequate rest and leads to earlier return to play. A condition of the lateral (outside) elbow from repeated compressive forces to that side may cause a vascular insufficiency in the joint, one

symptom is inability to completely straighten the arm at the elbow, and is a sign that should lead to evaluation by a sports oriented physician.

TREATMENT

If you suspect your child has Little Leaguer's Elbow, it is important that you let an Orthopedic Specialist or other Sports Medicine Physician examine him. Rest from any throwing activity is required until all symptoms have diminished. Ice placed on the elbow for 30 minutes, especially after throwing, may diminish inflammation. Anti-inflammatory drugs may be prescribed. Prior to returning, a rehabilitation program aimed at flexibility and strength for the forearm and wrist muscles organized by a sports oriented physical therapist or athletic trainer may be helpful.

RETURN TO PLAY

The goal of rehabilitation is to return your child to sports as soon as safely possible. Return to throwing activities should be carefully monitored by the patient and his family, the athletic trainer, and his physician. If they return too soon, the injury may be worsened and could lead to permanent damage. Everyone recovers from an injury at a different rate. Returning your child to sports will be determined by how soon the elbow recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been

since your child's injury occurred.

PREVENTION

Injuries in throwing sports are decreased and prevented by attention to flexibility, correct throwing technique and controlling the length of time or number of pitches thrown. Proper use of body mechanics will reduce stress on the elbow. At the earliest years, overhead rather than sidearm throwing should be emphasized and curve balls or breaking pitches should not be taught until the bones about the elbow are mature. Whipping and snapping of the elbow should be discouraged. A period of rest for the joints of immature athletes is also important for pitches thrown in

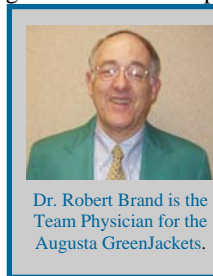
the backyard with parents. In addition, games and team practices also produce the same forces on the joint, and must be counted in the total number of pitches. Pitch counts, rather than innings pitched, are the important number. This may not be

totally related to innings pitched. Remember, we are hoping for games of life, not for a start up of injuries in childhood.

HELPFUL GUIDELINES

A child ages 9-12 years old should pitch a maximum of only 6 innings per week (and no more than 250 pitches).

A child ages 13-15 should pitch a maximum of 9 innings per week (and no more than 350 pitches).



Dr. Robert Brand is the Team Physician for the Augusta GreenJackets.

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Upcoming Features:

- *Eating Disorders*
- *Conditioning for Racquet Sports*
- *Mouth Guards in Sports*
- *Run for your health*

The Worth of the Certified Athletic Trainer

Benetta Albaugh, MA, ATC/L

Very few schools, coaches, parents, or athletes who have had the opportunity to work with a certified athletic trainer (ATC) would ever question how valuable they can be. However, most of these same individuals do not realize just how valuable their ATC is. For those of you unfamiliar with certified athletic trainers, they are healthcare professionals who work under the direction of physicians to specifically provide healthcare for student athletes. They have an extensive background in human anatomy, human physiology, biomechanics, and exercise physiology. In addition, the ATC is trained in the recognition, rehabilitation, treatment and management of injuries, as well as in nutritional and psychological counseling. The ATC is well prepared to apply skills for the prevention of injury, to provide care for an acute injury, and to manage rehabilitation after an injury. Based on these qualifications, the certified athletic trainer, other than a physician, is the

Are you taking full advantage of just how valuable having a certified athletic trainer can be?

most qualified individual to deal the secondary school athletic injuries on a daily basis.

OUR SPORTS MEDICINE PROGRAM

Doctors Hospital Sports Medicine provides a full-time certified athletic trainer to the following high schools: Evans High School, Westside High School, Aquinas High School, and Burke County High School. Of the remaining CSRA schools, some have no athletic training coverage while others only have part-time coverage.

THE CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS' IMPACT

Throughout the current school year our certified athletic trainers have kept meticulous records of exactly how many injuries they have evaluated, ice bags they have given out, tape jobs performed, wounds cleaned & bandaged, and any other myriad of services they may perform on a daily basis. These numbers would astound you. **All total, our certified athletic trainers have seen 2,866 athletes, performed 385 injury evaluations, taped 2,208 athletes, performed 462 rehabilitation**

sessions, and given out 524 ice bags. By performing these services on-site at the school the certified athletic trainer has saved the parent and athlete the inconvenience and cost of visiting a hospital, doctors' office, or physical therapy clinic to receive these services. **Based on average market price these certified athletic trainers have saved their respective schools and parents approximately \$83,000 in injury evaluation and rehabilitation alone.**

WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

If you were to ask any certified athletic trainer why they picked this as a career none of them would respond with "for the money". Each and every one of them does this job for the love of sports, the ability to help an injured athlete, and the satisfaction of assisting that same athlete return to full sports participation. Therefore, our certified athletic trainers keep track of these statistics not to use them to negotiate for a pay raise but to show every principal, coach, parent, and athlete why they should request if not demand a certified athletic trainer at every practice and game of every single sport fielded at their schools. Otherwise you are not taking full advantage of just how valuable having a certified athletic trainer can be.

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Dietary Supplements: Are they safe? Are they Effective?

John Ellis, MS, ATC/L

More than ever, athletes are trying to find an edge over their competitors. Any advantage in sport increases the chance of achieving athletic scholarships and drawing attention from professional scouts. Many players are turning to dietary supplements to gain size, strength, speed and power in order to out-perform the competition. It is necessary, especially for parents of younger athletes, to know about which supplements are safe or harmful and which supplements actually work. It is easier to find the safety and effectiveness of some of the more popular supplements, but what about the ones that are less popular? You should research dietary supplements to ensure safety and to prevent wasting money. There are some sources and organizations that offer assistance to the public about taking performance enhancing supplements.

REGULATION OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

A dietary supplement is defined as a vitamin, mineral, herb, botanical, amino acid, metabolite, constituent, or extract, or a combination of any of these ingredients. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate dietary supplements, but can prohibit the sale of a dietary supplement if it poses a significant or unreasonable risk of illness or injury. This was the criterion that the FDA used to ban the sale of ephedrine-containing dietary supplements in 2004. In other words, dietary supplements are not tested for safety before they are introduced to the market, whereas drugs must be tested and proved to be safe prior to being sold.

SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS

When determining the safety of a dietary supplement, it is necessary to research to see if the product is toxic or has any side effects. If a supplement is toxic, it is harmful to the body and should not be taken. Often products considered safe at

lower dosages may be toxic if taken at high dosages, such as oil based vitamins A, E, D, and K. Some supplements also contain side effects. Like prescription or over-the-counter medications, supplements may offer some benefit, but also cause some undesirable effects. For example, taking a multivitamin can benefit someone lacking a nutritional diet, but taking the vitamins on an empty stomach can cause nausea. It is up to athletes and their

parents to weigh the benefits and risks of dietary supplements. The following are publicly available internet resources evaluating and monitoring for unsafe dietary supplements:

- www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed
- www.nccam.nih.gov
- <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov>
- www.quackwatch.com
- www.supplementwatch.com

Beware of getting information from company advertisements and magazines. The goal of companies is to sell a product and will use marketing methods that mislead. If a company reports research findings, it is probably their company that did the research. They may report findings supporting their product, but leave out other findings. Also be aware that fitness or muscle magazine articles may not have the best interest of the public in mind. Supplement companies pay magazines to advertise their supplements. Peer reviewed journals are the only published materials providing accurate information about dietary supplements. For those not as familiar with evaluating scientific research,

physicians, athletic trainers, and National Strength and Conditioning Associations (NSCA) professionals are a good source of information.

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Once the risk of a supplement has been investigated, it is time to check out the benefit or effectiveness. The most common dietary supplements are designed to burn fat, increase

muscle size and strength, boost energy, and to replace or supplement meals. Again, product companies and magazines are **not** a good source. Use peer reviewed research and/or healthcare professionals to see if a dietary supplement actually does provide the benefits stated by the product maker. If the supplement is shown to be effective, then there is one final step before purchasing the product. Are the benefits of the supplement going to help you achieve your goals? A dietary supplement like creatine monohydrate that is effective in sustaining power for less than 30 seconds will not help the performance of a marathon runner. Whereas a carbohydrate or caffeine supplement has shown to aid endurance athletes. Choose supplements carefully to avoid wasting money.

Athletes that have a well-balanced diet rarely need supplements. Additional nutrients may enhance performance in elite competition, but rarely make a difference for others. Remember that dietary supplements do not have to be tested to be sold. Research products carefully and use professional advice to ensure safety and to prevent buying something that is unnecessary.



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It's Swimsuit Season!

Daniel Welch, ATC/L

April showers bring May flowers, and May flowers can only mean one thing: Warmer temperatures, and the beginning of another swimsuit season. So maybe your resolutions for the New Year haven't worked out as planned, and you are dealing with some extra body weight. Don't panic, as there is still time to shed some pounds and tone your muscles.

The best way to improve your figure is to pay attention to what you're eating and increase your physical activity. Both of these tasks are easier now that the weather is getting warmer and the days are getting longer. When paying attention to the food you ingest, be sure to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables. By eating more nutritious food, you can eliminate the need for eating processed foods or foods with high fat and calorie content. Six foods you may want to add to your diet

include nectarines, plums, cherry tomatoes, passion fruit, watercress and tilapia. These foods are high in nutrients and provide the body with energy. They are also easily digested by the body and will help to eliminate unwanted pounds. Be sure to also stay hydrated, concentrating on drinking 8 glasses of water or juice per day. By cutting back on soft drinks or other sugary drinks, this will also help the body lose unnecessary weight.

While concentrating on your diet, it is also a good idea to increase your physical activity. With as little as 20 minutes a day of physical activity five times per week, you will begin to notice your body getting toned. This can be done by doing chores around the house, such as walking the dog, vacuuming vigorously, or simply climbing up and down stairs five to ten times per day. Weight training in addition to physical activity will increase your weight loss

and improve your muscle definition for a leaner figure.

It is recommended that you lose no more than two pounds per week, but don't be discouraged if the weight comes off slowly at first. With these changes in your eating and exercise habits, your body will be transforming fat into muscle, and the results may not be in the form of weight loss. Instead, you'll notice your arms and legs getting toned and excess fat starting to disappear. Keep up with this program, and in no time you'll be ready for a day at the beach or pool!

The YMCA on Wheeler Road is offering a nutrition and exercise class to help tone your core muscles. This seminar is on Wednesday, May 3 and begins at 1:30. For more information please call the YMCA at 706-922-9622.