



Central California Pediatrics

Specialty information for physicians who treat children and expectant mothers.



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Overuse Sports Injuries in Children

Kerry Loveland, MD
Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon

Overuse injuries in children are on the rise nationwide. Central California's year-round pleasant weather increases the risk as it enables sports participation without an off-season. Early single-sport specialization has been associated with increased overuse injuries in children and could be detrimental to long-term performance in young athletes. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of overuse injuries and learning how to treat them can help prevent further injury, loss of playtime and long-term consequences.

Causes

A child's growing skeleton includes several areas where tendons attach to growth plates. The majority of overuse injuries occur at these sites known as apophyses. Continued stress in these areas without adequate rest leads to apophysitis or inflammation/irritation. Children have weaker bones compared to adults, increasing their risk for stress fractures that may involve growth plates as well.

Signs and Symptoms

Pain is the common presenting symptom for all patients, typically with some swelling. Occasionally the young athlete doesn't want to disappoint their parents so they may only present with decreased interest in practice or change in their technique. The most common areas for apophysitis are the tibial tubercle (Osgood-Schlatter's); distal pole of patella (Jumper's knee); calcaneus (Sever's); and medial epicondyle

at the elbow (Little Leaguer's elbow). The second metatarsal, shaft of the tibia and proximal humerus (Little Leaguer's shoulder) are common stress fracture sites. The pain is usually localized discretely and the child is tender to palpation. One exception is patellofemoral syndrome, which presents as a vague anterior knee pain sometimes with no specific tenderness upon examination.

Workup and Management

Workup begins with attention paid to tenderness elicited on examination. X-rays can be helpful as they occasionally show fragmentation and soft tissue swelling over the affected site. The goal of management is eventual resolution of pain and return to sporting and recreational activities. Most injuries can be appropriately managed with a six-to-eight week rest period from the offending activity, and physical therapy to improve flexibility and muscle balance. Patients can then begin a gradual return to activities. Educating the patient and parents on the cause of the injury is very important. Education includes why the child was injured (excessive physical activity and lack of appropriate rest) and how to avoid future incidences (adequate rest and good global conditioning with avoidance of single-sport specialization).

Referral to a pediatric orthopaedic or sports medicine specialist is appropriate if above measures have not relieved pain.

Specialty Care Centers

Olivewood Specialty Care Center Merced - 209-726-0199
McHenry Specialty Care Center Modesto - 209-572-3880

34th Street Specialty Care Center Bakersfield - 661-843-8980
Akers Specialty Care Center Visalia - 559-302-1245

Preventing the Spread of Communicable Diseases

Dr. Nael Mhaissen,
Medical Director, Infection Prevention and Control, and Co-chair, Infection Prevention Subcommittee

Raed Houry,
Director, Quality and Patient Safety, and Co-chair, Infection Prevention Subcommittee

Patients with highly communicable infectious diseases are occasionally referred to our outpatient specialty care or primary care service locations throughout Central California. To reduce the risk of these children transmitting communicable diseases to other children and families in the public waiting areas, we request your assistance by doing the following:

- If your patient has, or is suspected of having, a highly communicable infectious disease (i.e., pertussis, chickenpox, measles, rubella, mumps, communicable tuberculosis, diphtheria, disseminated zoster, etc.), please call the Valley Children's department or practice where you are sending your patient ahead of time.

This will enable our staff to make arrangements for your patient to have their service provided with the appropriate isolation precautions.

We hope this process will improve service for your patients and families. Thank you for your cooperation as we work to ensure the best care for all of our patients.

If you have questions, please call the
Valley Children's Infection Prevention Department at 559-353-5169.

Medical Staff News

The following pediatric specialists recently joined Valley Children's:

Gastroenterology

Karla Au Yeung, MD
Minesh Patel, DO

Imaging

Ceayee Mak, MD

Infectious Diseases

M. Nael Mhaissen, MD
Chokechai Rongkavilit, MD,
Medical Director

Neurosurgery

Prithvi Narayan, MD, Medical Director

Otolaryngology

Rachelle Wareham, MD

The Willson Heart Center

Upinder Jodhka, MD (cardiologist)
Lakshmi Nagaraju, MD (cardiologist)

Valley Children's Physician Liaison

For questions or assistance, please call 559-474-2707 or physicianrelations@valleychildrens.org