

## Do Sports Medicine Physicians only treat competitive athletes?

- No, Sports Medicine Physicians are ideal physicians for the non-athlete as well, and are excellent resources for the individual who wishes to become active or begin an exercise program. For the "weekend warrior" or "industrial athlete" who experiences an injury, the same expertise used for the competitive athlete can be applied to return the individual as quickly as possible to full function.
- Physicians in the AMSSM are dedicated to providing comprehensive and quality care to the active individual.
- To find a Sports Medicine Physician in your area, more information, and/or a copy of the Mission Statement call the AMSSM at **913-327-1415** or visit the web site at [www.amssm.org](http://www.amssm.org).

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## What is a Sports Medicine Physician?



**The American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM)** was organized in 1991 by a group of physicians who recognized the need for an organization within the field of sports medicine that approached athletes, exercising individuals, and teams comprehensively with consultative and continuous care of their orthopedic, medical, nutritional, and psychosocial issues. Although sports medicine concepts are often thought of in conjunction with professional and elite athletes, these concepts apply to athletes of all levels including grade school, high school, college and recreational athletes ("weekend athletes"). AMSSM is comprised of Sports Medicine Physicians whose goal is to provide a link between the rapidly expanding core of knowledge related to sports medicine and its application to patients in a clinical setting.

## What is a Sports Medicine Physician?

- A physician with specialized training who promotes lifelong fitness and wellness, and encourages prevention of illness and injury. This physician helps the patient maximize function and minimize disability and time away from sports, work, or school.
- He or she is a leader of the sports medicine team, which also includes specialty physicians and surgeons, athletic trainers, physical therapists, coaches, other personnel, and, of course, the athlete.
- They are experienced sports medicine physicians with a primary specialty in Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, or Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, most of whom obtain 1-2 years of additional training in sports medicine through accredited fellowship (subspecialty) programs in Sports Medicine. Physicians, who are board certified in Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, or Pediatrics, are then eligible to take a subspecialty qualification examination in Sports Medicine. Additional forums, which add to the expertise of a Sports Medicine Physician, include continuing education in sports medicine, and membership and participation in sports medicine societies.

## What is the difference between a Sports Medicine Physician and an Orthopedic Surgeon?

Both are well trained in musculoskeletal medicine. Sports Medicine Physicians specialize in the non-operative medical treatment of musculoskeletal sports conditions. Orthopedic surgeons are also trained in the operative treatment of these conditions. Approximately 90% of all sports injuries are non-surgical, and Sports Medicine Physicians can expedite referral to an orthopedic/sports surgeon when indicated, and can help guide referrals to appropriate rehabilitative care and ancillary services as needed. Common examples of musculoskeletal problems include:

- Acute injuries (such as ankle sprains, muscle strains, knee & shoulder injuries, and fractures)
- Overuse injuries (such as tendonitis, stress fractures)



**Sports Medicine Physicians have received additional training in the non-musculoskeletal aspects of sports medicine. Common examples of these include:**

- Mild traumatic brain injury and other head injuries
- Athletes with chronic or acute illness (such as infectious mononucleosis, asthma or diabetes)
- Nutrition, supplements, ergogenic aids and performance issues
- Exercise prescription for patients who want to increase their fitness
- Injury prevention

- "Return to play" decisions in the sick or injured athlete
- Strength training and conditioning
- Healthy lifestyle promotion

**Most Sports Medicine Physicians also serve as Team Physicians for local and/or National teams and clubs. These physicians must fulfill published qualifications with the following responsibilities:**

- Pre-participation physical examination
- Injury assessment and management
- Care of sports-related and general medical needs of athletes
- Special populations (elderly, disabled, women, youth, etc)
- Sports psychology issues
- Addressing substance use
- Education and counseling on illness & injury prevention
- Coordinating care with other members of the sports medicine team to include athletic trainers, physical therapists, personal physicians, other medical and surgical specialties, and other ancillary personnel of specialty care and rehabilitation
- Communication with athletic trainers, coaches, school administration, as well as athletes and their families

