NEW EVIDENCE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS

Participation in youth sports can be an enjoyable experience and offer many benefits such as self-esteem, peer socialization and general health. However, an emphasis on elite competition has led to increased pressure to begin high-intensity training at a young age. Consequently, overuse injuries and burnout have become common.

In response, the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine has released evidence-based recommendations on Overuse Injuries and Burnout Youth Sports (1). Read on to find out what sports medicine physicians recommend keep youth participating in sports safely and enjoyably.

**U.S. YOUTH SPORTS**

**Competition**
- An emphasis too early on elite performance training and competition at young age can lead to injury and burnout.

**60 million**
- 44 million 6-18 years old who participate in some form of sport
- 16 million at least once a week

**Sport Diversification**
- Youth should participate in multiple sports in the short term to avoid injury and burnout.
- Participation in multiple sports has been shown to increase long-term success in sports and may reduce the risk for severe injury and burnout.
- Sport diversification at young ages is encouraged.

**THE ISSUES**

**Overuse**
- Overuse injuries occur due to repetitive activity without recovery.

**Burnout**
- Burnout can occur as a result of chronic stress that causes a young athlete to withdraw from participation in a sport that was previously enjoyable.

**Long-Term Consequences**
- These issues can remain long term and from adolescence and have the potential for long-term health consequences that can be detrimental.

**RISK & PREVENTION**

- Careful monitoring during a child's growth spurt, using recovery periods, not pushing participation too early, and learning key muscle groups.
- If a history of prior injury is present, it is advisable to consult with a pediatrician or sports medicine specialist.
- Adolescents who should be encouraged to have a break from sports training are children who have experienced frequent injuries.
- Limits on sports-specific repetitive movement, avoidance of male pitch (softball) and individualized recovery.

**WHO CAN HELP?**

**Athletes**
- If you are injured or think you may be missing training, see a pediatrician or sports medicine specialist.

**Physicians**
- Be familiar with sports-related injuries.
- Can provide treatment, rehabilitation, and the advice on return to play.

**Parents**
- Avoid over-dimensioning the child.
- Encourage them to enjoy the sport and help them to learn and have fun.

**Coaches**
- Provide specific conditioning programs that can reduce the likelihood of youth injuries in sports.

**How can a sports medicine physician help?**

A sports medicine physician has specialized knowledge in the treatment and prevention of illness and injury. Sports medicine physicians provide comprehensive care for athletes and other active individuals. They also serve as researchers for new treatments and technologies.

To find a sports medicine physician in your area, visit: www.ams.org

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