Sports Medicine Physicians

From youth athletes and weekend warriors, to active people and elite athletes, the Sports Medicine Physician is an important part of your patients' healthcare team. Sports Medicine Physicians are Fellowship-trained in non-surgical musculoskeletal treatments, the evaluation and management of concussions and prevention and treatment of activity-related injuries and illness. They can help your patients maximize their function, while minimizing their disability and time away from sports, work or school. Sports Medicine Physicians aim to permit the patient to achieve his or her personal best.

A referral to a Sports Medicine Physician means that your patient will benefit from the added expertise and care of a specialist, who will work with you and keep you informed along the way. AMSSM members are leaders in clinical sports medicine and research. They understand what your patients need and what you value in a referral relationship, making the decision to refer your patients to a Sports Medicine Physician a “win-win.”

Sports Medicine is recognized as a subspecialty by both the American Board of Medical Specialties and by Medicare (specialty code 23). Sports Medicine Physicians are initially board certified in Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, or Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation and then go on to complete one or more years of additional training in Sports Medicine through an ACGME-approved fellowship program. Sports medicine physicians successfully complete a subspecialty qualification examination in Sports Medicine and maintain requirements for ongoing certification. This rigorous process was instituted to distinguish certified Sports Medicine Physicians from other physicians without this specialized training. In fact, many professional sports leagues and college teams require a sports medicine certification to be a team physician.

Sports Medicine Physicians are uniquely positioned to help meet the demands of today’s healthcare environment.
Expertise in musculoskeletal injury
Sports Medicine Physicians undergo extensive training in musculoskeletal medicine, and as a result are highly qualified to manage these problems. While orthopedic surgeons specialize in the operative treatment of musculoskeletal injuries, Sports Medicine Physicians focus on the whole person to accurately diagnose and optimize non-operative treatment of these injuries. This serves the great majority of the population since the majority of musculoskeletal injuries are best treated non-surgically. Common examples of musculoskeletal problems include acute ankle, knee and shoulder injuries; muscle strains; fractures and joint dislocations; and overuse injuries such as tendonitis and stress fractures. If surgery for an injury is required, Sports Medicine Physicians can expedite referral to the appropriate surgical specialty for intervention. They can also help guide referrals to appropriate rehabilitative care and ancillary services when necessary or even develop appropriate home rehabilitation programs for patients which saves money without compromising care. Additionally, Sports Medicine Physicians practice non-operative sports medicine with focus on advanced diagnostic skills including ultrasound and the ability to perform many treatments from rehab through minimally invasive procedures, like injections, helping to both identify injury patterns and deliver advanced treatment methods to their patients.

Expertise in activity-related medical issues
Sports Medicine Physicians possess additional training in the medical aspects of Sports Medicine. Appropriate management of these conditions is vital to safe participation in sports, recreational, and exercise activities.

Common reasons to refer to a Sports Medicine Physician
- Evaluation and management of concussions
- Evaluation and management of athletes with chronic or acute illness (such as infectious mononucleosis, exercise-related asthma or diabetes)
- Return to play decisions for the sick or injured athlete
- Assessment of nutrition and performance issues
- Recommendations on appropriate strength training and conditioning activities
- Exercise prescription for patients who want to start exercising or increase fitness
- Assessment of injury risk and development of injury prevention protocols
- Comprehensive non-surgical care for activity related conditions (tendons/joint injuries/OA/MSK issues)
- Ultrasound-guided procedures

Sports Medicine does NOT just mean the competitive athlete
Regardless of whether patients are running a marathon, biking their favorite trail or taking their first steps toward a healthier life, a Sports Medicine Physician understands each person, and is uniquely qualified to help them achieve their personal best.

Sports Medicine Physicians are also ideal providers for the active individual and are excellent resources for those who wish 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.

Sports Medicine Physicians also receive training in the detection and non-surgical interventions for arthritis and osteoporosis, delaying joint replacement, and reducing fracture risk in affected individuals.

Getting people moving
Keeping patients healthy is the common goal among medical professionals. Of the myriad of medical specialties that exist today, Sports Medicine is centered within a wellness-based (rather than disease-based) model. Beyond the abilities of other clinicians, Sports Medicine Physicians, by virtue of their training, have the capability to take a sedentary population and incorporate the health-beneficial effects of exercise into people’s lives. Most adults fail to adequately exercise and about one-quarter are completely sedentary.

A word about the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
AMSSM is a multi-disciplinary organization of sports medicine physicians dedicated to education, research, advocacy and the care of athletes of all ages. The majority of AMSSM members are primary care physicians with fellowship training and added qualification in sports medicine who then combine their practice of sports medicine with their primary specialty. AMSSM includes members who specialize solely in non-surgical sports medicine and serve as team physicians at the youth level, NCAA, NFL, MLB, NBA, WNBA, MLS and NHL, as well as with Olympic & Paralympic teams. By nature of their training and experience, sports medicine physicians are ideally suited to provide comprehensive medical care for athletes, sports teams or active individuals who are looking to maintain or get started towards a healthy lifestyle. Find a sports medicine physician in your area at www.amssm.org.