



Hillsborough Baseball League

Hillsborough, NJ

Don't Push Through The Pain, No Matter How Much You Love The Game.

What a Little League player needs to know about overuse injuries.

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There is an old saying, "It's all fun and games until someone gets hurt". As a young player it is understandable you may only be thinking about the fun you are having playing baseball but, you should also be aware of what improper techniques and playing too much can do to your body.

A Tommy John injury is common overuse injury you may have already heard of. It is when a ligament on your elbow is torn. A ligament is something that holds your bones together. When a ligament is torn it can be very serious especially in the case of a Tommy John injury. You may even need surgery!

Dr James Andrews, who is well known for performing Tommy John surgery on professional baseball players, said that more than 1/4 of his patients in the past six years were high school students or younger. Dr Andrews even had

a patient that was only 7 years old! This shows that even you can be at risk for an overuse injury and that it is important to know how to prevent them.

Hurt from playing too much

Most frequent overuse injuries caused by youth sports:

Little League shoulder: Injury to the growth plate in the shoulder. A growth plate is the area of growing tissue in the long bones in children and adolescents. Each long bone has at least two growth plates: one at each end. The growth plate determines the future length and shape of the mature bone. When growth is complete during adolescence, the growth plate closes and is replaced by solid bone. Growth plates are weak spots, therefore vulnerable to injury.

Tendonitis: An inflammation, irritation and swelling of a tendon, which connects muscle and bone. Most commonly found in elbow, shoulder, wrist, knee and heel.

Stress fractures in back and limbs: A tiny crack in the bone.

Osgood-Schlatter disease: A painful swelling of the bump on the upper part of the shinbone, just below the knee.

Little League elbow: Inflammation and deterioration of ligaments and tendons in the elbow.

Shin splints: Inflammation of the tissues surrounding the shinbone.



Source: American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine
R.L. REBACK/STAFF ARTIST

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT AN OVERUSE INJURY :

Preventing overuse injuries is important but, catching an injury in its early stages can also be important. It is key to recognize signs such as the tired arm and pain or soreness in a certain area such as your elbow. If you experience one of these signs, tell a coach or your parents right away.

How to Prevent Injury

- **When you are tired stop!**- It is important to avoid playing with a tired arm because most likely a tired arm will become an injured arm.
- **Rest**- Resting can prevent a tired arm. A pitcher 16 years or younger with a pitch count of 41-60 per day, should be resting at least 2 days a week.
- **Not about the speed**- Only throw at a speed you can handle.
- **Make sure you are warming up**- Even though you may feel silly, stretching can help prevent injury, so take it seriously.
- **Pitch counts**-Count your pitches and make sure you are not exceeding the number of pitches set for your age group.
- **Proper throwing skills** Throw the way your coach teaches you if something feels funny, don't be afraid to speak up.
- **One team is good enough**- Avoid playing on multiple teams per season or playing all year round. The off season is important for rest and recovery

