

# *Little League Elbow Injuries: Is Your Child at Risk?*



## **SYMPTOMS:**

◆ **ELBOW IS SORE TO THE TOUCH AND MAY EXPERIENCE SWELLING**

◆ **SUDDEN ONSET OF PAIN & FEELS LIKE SOMETHING GIVING WAY IN THE ELBOW**

◆ **PAIN MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH CATCHING, THROWING OVERHAND OR LOCKING OF THE ELBOW JOINT**

## **Prevention**

Prevention strategies include:

- Always warm up before pitching with light aerobic exercise, such as jogging or jumping jacks.
- Always stretch your muscles slowly and gently before pitching.
- Always follow the pitching rules of your baseball league and do not play in two leagues at the same time.
- Limit your pitching to:

4-10 innings per week

80-100 pitches per game

30-40 pitches per practice

- Learn and practice the mechanics of good pitching technique.
- Do not throw curve balls and sliders until high school when the growth plate in your elbow is fused with the bone.

## *Definition*

"Little League Elbow" is a throwing injury to the elbow commonly found among pre-teen and early-teenagers that play baseball or softball competitively. Injury occurs when the repetitive throwing creates an excessively strong pull on elbow tendons and ligaments. This can tear ligament and tendon away from the bone. Sometimes small fragments of bone are pulled away as well. The elbow can also become compressed, causing bones to rub together. Young athletes are particularly prone to this type of injury because their bones are immature. A child should stop throwing at the first sign of elbow pain, restricted range of elbow motion or locking of the elbow joint. Young pitchers are also advised against trying to throw a curve ball. The additional twisting motion used to make a pitch "break" is very hard on the immature elbow.

The age groups most affected are pre-high school players, anywhere from ages 10 to 15, with the peak incidence in the 12 to 14-year-old age group. Treatment and recovery depend on the severity of the injury. Recovery time ranges from 6 weeks to 3 months.

Treatment may include:

- **CHIROPRACTIC & PHYSICAL THERAPY**
- **REST**  
Do not pitch or do any activities that cause elbow pain. Do not play sports, especially throwing sports, until the pain is gone.
- **COLD**  
Apply ice or a cold pack to the outside of the elbow for 15-20 minutes, 4 times a day, for several days. Wrap the ice or cold pack in a towel. Do not apply the ice directly to your skin.

## **TREATMENT**

A Doctor of Chiropractic can offer guidelines on exercise, conditioning techniques, nutrition, and general fitness. Of course, when treatment is needed, the chiropractor is fully equipped to manage nonsurgical treatment of typical sports injuries. Chiropractic care also works on correcting misaligned or out of place vertebrae and can remove the pressure placed on the nerve endings that line the surface of the joint and course through the space between the joints, reducing pain and improving flexibility and function. To see if chiropractic may be able to help you call 770-998-1414 today for a complimentary consultation.

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