

Score at Summer Injury Prevention



In Los Angeles County, kids ages 6 to 17 get a big “kick” out of soccer, which is followed in popularity by swimming, basketball, baseball and running. While more time engaged in sports builds good health, it also means more opportunities for injury. Advice from **Carlos A. Uquillas, MD**, and **Natasha Trentacosta, MD**, pediatric sports medicine and orthopaedics experts at the Cedars-Sinai Kerlan-Jobe Institute, will help your kids play safer and score higher.

1 Beware of Overuse Injuries

Playing sports year-round leaves little downtime for recovery and letting the body’s overstressed tissues heal. Because many kids specialize in a sport early on, certain muscle groups become vulnerable to overuse injuries. This can make younger children prone to long-term problems, such as Little League elbow or shoulder.

2 Females’ Sports Injuries Are Different

Female adolescent athletes are more likely to experience knee injuries than young males, in part because of differences in neuromuscular structures and a resulting stiffer knee motion during athletic maneuvers. For instance, females tend to land differently—with the knee falling to the center instead of outward. Correct training can improve pivoting, jumping and landing to protect against injury.

3 Understand the Basics

Parents, coaches and young athletes can prevent injury by educating themselves about body mechanics and the importance of conditioning, proper nutrition, protective gear and rest. A new study from the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine cited fatigue as a major cause of knee injuries in adolescent athletes.

4 If You See Something, Do Something

Seek medical attention sooner rather than later if there’s swelling or a noticeable deformity of a joint such as the knee or elbow. Do the same if a knee “locks” or catches in one position. Ice the joint, rest and use anti-inflammatory medications, and if a sprain or strain doesn’t improve in a week or two, head to a sports medicine or orthopaedic specialist.

Skaters Rule, Dude

Young Angelenos played more than two sports on average during the past year, according to the LA84 Foundation Youth Sports Survey. While most children try traditional sports, skateboarders might be the most passionate athletes. Those who skate had the highest “participation frequency,” hopping on their boards an average of 90 times a year. Tackle football was a distant second, at 60 times per year.