



KIDS NEED CHIROPRACTIC TOO Claudia Anrig, DC

Sports-Related Injuries in Children: What Parents Need to Know

Almost 75 percent of families with children between the ages of 5 and 18 have at least one child who plays organized sports, either at school or on a community team. This may seem like a good thing; after all, there's the benefit of learning to work together as a team, building camaraderie and consistent physical activity. However, parents need to pay special attention to the potential injuries that can occur at any time and proactively involve you, their chiropractor, as a part of their child's health care team. You may need to become more actively involved by teaching preventative techniques to young athletes and incorporating extremity adjusting, stretching and rehab, and nutrition to maximize their performance and recovery if (or when) an injury occurs.

Inside the Numbers

It is estimated that 3.5 million children under the age of 14 receive medical treatment for sports injuries each year and that almost one-third of all injuries incurred during childhoods are related to sports activities, with the most common injuries being strains and sprains. Here is the estimated number of children injured each year by sport:

- Football: 350,000+
- Basketball: 300,000+
- Soccer: 140,000+
- Baseball: 120,000+
- Swimming: 43,000+
- Wrestling: 33,500+
- Gymnastics: 26,500+
- Hockey: 21,000+
- Track and Field: 17,000+

In addition to the health consequences, the financial costs for treating injuries are estimated to be between *\$3 Billion and \$4 Billion* a year. In addition, the impact of childhood sports injuries on the number of school days missed can be significant. The Institute for Preventative Sports Medicine estimates that each year, there are almost 212 million school days missed by students attributable to musculoskeletal injuries, the vast majority of which are sports-related injuries.

Concussions: The Silent Injury

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that approximately 300,000 children and adolescents suffer from sports-related concussions each year. Many of these children will

recover within just a few weeks, but research is proving that this "silent injury" can have long-lasting effects that are easy to miss at the time of the injury. Symptoms such as memory problems, chronic headaches, difficulty concentrating and even depression can manifest for months and even years after a serious concussion. Many doctors and parents have also noticed abrupt personality changes following a serious sports-related head injury.

Worse yet are the young athletes who get up, "shake it off" and continue playing after an impact on the field. Warning signs are silenced by adrenaline or endorphins, and since only about 5 percent of injuries that cause a concussion will actually "knock out" the athlete, they don't realize that they've been seriously injured. Failing to get proper medical attention following a head injury can have disastrous consequences; while rare, a concussion can even result in death. And don't think football is the only sport that results in concussions: Any child involved in basketball, soccer, hockey or any sport that puts them in close proximity with their opponent(s) and/or teammates (or subject to a hard impact or fall) is susceptible to this dangerous brain injury.