

PEDIATRIC OVERUSE INJURIES REFERRAL GUIDELINE

Maine Medical Partners - Orthopedics & Sports Medicine (Div. Of Pediatric Sports Medicine) · 119 Gannett Dr, South Portland, ME · (207) 773-0040

HIGH RISK

SUGGESTED EMERGENT CONSULTATION

SYMPTOMS AND LABS

- Swollen, erythematous joint(s) with fever
- Severe progressively worsening pain

SUGGESTED PREVISIT WORKUP

- Send to ER or sports medicine that day for further evaluation
- If unsure, consider contacting pediatric sports medicine specialist: MMP - Orthopedics & Sports Medicine (207) 773-0040

MODERATE RISK

SUGGESTED CONSULTATION OR CO-MANAGEMENT

SYMPTOMS AND LABS

- Limping
- Swelling in joint(s) without erythema or fever
- Pain limiting function/sports participation in high-level athlete
- Locking symptoms
- Pain out of proportion for overuse
- Not improving with initial steps taken

SUGGESTED WORKUP

- Consider x-rays
- Consider crutches or bracing
- Hold from sports if limping, swelling in joints, or having severe pain
- Refer to pediatric sports medicine (207) 773-0040
- If no pediatric sports medicine specialist nearby, refer to a non-operative sports

LOW RISK

SUGGESTED ROUTINE CARE

SYMPTOMS AND LABS

- Chronic pain
- Mild symptoms (able to push through pain to participate in sports/gym)
- NO swelling or locking symptoms
- NO clear injury/onset of pain

SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT

- Consider referral to physical therapy or provide focused stretching home program depending on your exam/diagnosis
- Clear for sports/gym participation if no limping, no significant pain after or during activity

CLINICAL PEARLS

- Exam and history are usually sufficient to diagnose overuse injuries, x-rays help rule out fractures or other pathology.
- Growth plates are the weakest link in growing skeleton, NOT tendons or ligaments.
- Secondary growth plates serve as a pop-off valve and exist in different areas of the body at different ages.
- Joint effusion is ALWAYS abnormal in pediatrics.

General Treatment Strategies:

- Activity Modification:
 - Can range from immobilization to relative avoidance of certain maneuvers that provoke pain
 - No activity if limping or modifying gait due to pain
 - Ice, NSAIDs
- Gain appropriate flexibility
 - Stretching is the #1 way to resolve pain from apophysitis (tugging on secondary growth plates)
- Improve strength deficits

Prevention:

- Adequate physical training and variation in sport-specific movements (AKA – cross training/playing more than one sport)
 - Adequate flexibility and strength to reduce strain
 - At least 2-3 months off from any given sport per year
- Active rest after cycles of training (AKA – BREAKS from sport/days off)
- Pitch counts, reducing curve/slider type pitching
 - Avoid playing fatigued
 - Bottom line – Improve biomechanics

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