



## ***Top Doctors for Top Performers.***

### **When Play is Too Much**

Sports are a great way for you to exercise and learn about teamwork and discipline while having fun! However, sports may also come with injuries, both the obvious, like broken bones, and the not so obvious, like tendonitis. These less apparent injuries are called overuse injuries, which often result from too much athletic play.

#### **What is an overuse injury?**

Injuries can be categorized into two groups: acute and overuse. Acute injuries are usually the result of a single, traumatic event such as fall or hit to the leg or arm. Some common examples of acute injuries are wrist fractures, ankle sprains and shoulder dislocations.

Overuse injuries are more difficult than acute injuries to diagnose and treat because they are subtle and usually occur over time. When repetitive traumas affect the tendons, bones, muscles and joints, an overuse injury develops. Common examples include tennis elbow, swimmer's shoulder, Achilles tendonitis and shin splints.

#### **Why do injuries occur?**

There are various reasons why an injury might occur, including improper training, improper technique, equipment failure and/or anatomic or biomechanical issues of the athlete.

#### **How can I tell if I'm playing too much?**

Most of the time, you will know you are hurt because you have some pain. However, the list below includes other signs that you are playing too hard and should talk to a parent, athletic trainer or doctor right away:

- Cannot put weight on a certain body part, such as the ankle or wrist

- Favor one side of the body over the other; begin limping
- Have pain when using a body part
- Cannot sleep
- Have shortness of breath/trouble breathing during activity
- Have headaches during or after activity
- Experience severe joint or muscle stiffness
- Feel dizzy or lightheaded
- Cannot sit and/or climb stairs
- Cannot feel fingers or toes
- Experience unusual weakness
- Have irritated skin and/or blisters
- If you begin to have pain associated with play tell your athletic trainer, parent or coach. You should not be told or encouraged to play through pain.