



GUIDE TO BASEBALL INJURY PREVENTION

Almost 500,000 baseball-related injuries are treated each year. Baseball players' injuries are most often caused by overuse, repetitive throwing, poor body mechanics, muscular imbalance, muscle weakness, and muscle inflexibility. Kids are particularly susceptible to injury—an estimated 58 percent of baseball players age 11 - 18 experience elbow injuries during or after organized games.¹

- Baseball has the highest fatality rate of all children's team sports: Three to four children per year in the U.S. die as a result of impact from the ball.
- Baseball is the leading cause of sports related eye injuries in children.
- As many as 45 percent of pitchers under the age of 12 have chronic elbow pain.
 - Among high school pitchers, the percentage rises to 58 percent.
- Pitchers suffer the most injuries (21.6 percent) of the high school players
- Most Common Injuries
 - Little League Elbow
 - Little League Shoulder
 - Rotator Cuff Tears
 - Back, Knee, and Wrist Sprains

INJURY PREVENTION MEASURES

- **The National Athletic Trainers' Association suggests that high school athletes engage in conditioning training at least six weeks before the start of practice.**
- **Previous injury is the most important risk factor for injury.** Do not return to play too soon. Follow your doctor's recommendations. Your team needs its players on the field, not on the sidelines.
- **Teach proper throwing mechanics.**
 - More body rotation to decrease shoulder stress (core strength).
 - Improper elbow angle – arm away from body when ball released.
 - Do not try to throw too hard.
- **Warm-up to throw, don't throw to warm-up.**
- **Limit the number of pitches thrown.**
 - Age 10 and under: 75/day, 11-12: 85/day, 13-16: 95, 17-18: 105
- **Use properly fitting equipment; especially shoes (cleats).**
- **Never play through pain!**
- **Make sure first aid is available at all games and practices.**

¹ Petty DH, Andrews JR, Fleisig GS, Cain EL. *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*. 32:1158-1164, 2004.