

A Cy-Fair parent's guide to SPORTS INJURIES

Watch for the eight most common injuries
that might affect your student-athlete



Written by Tonya Ellis



A meniscus tear often happens when there is a sudden twisting of the knee



Concussions can cause headaches, dizziness, and blurry vision



ACL tears are one of the most common injuries in sports

1 CONCUSSION

A direct blow to the head, or rapid turning of the head, can cause the brain injury called a concussion.

Most concussions occur during competition or game play versus practice. Girls appear to sustain more concussions and have more problems with concussions than boys.

Watch Out For: Headache, dizziness, blurry vision, appearing confused, and being slow to answer questions, according to Dr. Jorge Gomez, a sports medicine physician with Texas Children's Hospital West Campus.

If It Happens: Rest your body, but no watching TV or video games. By state law, kids who've had a concussion can't return to the field without a doctor's clearance. Most recover within a week or two.

2 TURF TOE

A hyperextension of the big toe happens when an athlete pushes forward forcefully off of a hard surface, like artificial turf.

Watch Out For: Pain when moving the big toe and swelling.

If It Happens: Apply ice and rest foot until healed. Athletes can also wear special shoe inserts. Expect to stay out of the game for about three weeks.

3 ACL TEARS

Ligament injuries in the knee, such as an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear, are one of the most common sports injuries. "Seventy percent of ACL tears are caused by non-contact injuries," explains Dr. David Mack, an orthopedic surgeon at North Cypress Medical Center. "You do it with sudden changes in direction, or landing awkwardly from a jump."

Soccer and basketball players tear their ACLs most often, and girls are two to eight times more likely to tear their ACL than boys.

Watch Out For: Your knee pops, followed by intense swelling and pain.

If It Happens: With very few exceptions, if you're young, the only treatment is to have surgery. Expect to be out of the game for four to six months for surgery and rehab.

4 DEHYDRATION

Insufficient water consumption that causes the blood volume to decrease and the blood to thicken. Dehydration causes extra strain on the cardiovascular system and the heart rate to raise dangerously to maintain adequate blood supply to the muscles and organs. "In addition to not drinking enough water, other factors include drinking too much caffeine, or having a viral illness," adds Dr. Gomez.

Watch Out For: Extreme thirst, headache, nausea, abdominal pain, and muscle cramping.

If It Happens: Stop exercising and drink plenty of water. If you can't hold fluids down because of vomiting, you may need to receive fluids through an IV.

5 DISLOCATIONS

An injury that occurs when there is an abnormal separation in the joint, where two or more bones meet. "If the shoulder is dislocated, everyone within a half-mile radius is going to know about it," Dr. Mack explains.

Watch Out For: The shoulder will not look right; the normal muscle bulge from the deltoid will seem like it is missing.

If It Happens: A doctor will manipulate the shoulder back into place. Teens have a 50% chance of recurrence. Use physical therapy to gain strength.

6 HAND OR WRIST

Common hand or wrist injuries include fractures, sprains, and tendonitis. These occur when athletes fall with their hands outstretched.

Watch Out For: A swollen, painful wrist.

If It Happens: Athletes could have to wear a cast or brace until the area is healed. In worst cases, surgery may be needed. Fractured growth plates could keep the bone from growing normally.

7 MENISCUS TEARS

The meniscus is a C-shaped cartilage that keeps the knee steady. Injury often happens during a sudden twisting of the knee, pivoting, or deceleration causing a tear in your cartilage.

Watch Out For: Pain when straightening or bending the knee. The athlete often feels or hears a pop.

If It Happens: Surgery is sometimes needed or the tear may heal with rest. Stay sidelined from sports until the tear heals.

8 SHOULDER INJURIES

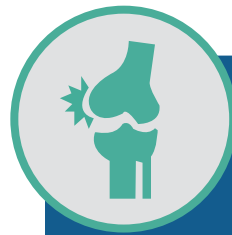
A shoulder injury or dislocation usually occurs when the arm is rotated outward and backward. Sports with repetitive arm use, like a baseball pitcher or swimmer, are more prone to this type of injury.

Special thanks to our medical experts,
Dr. David Mack and Dr. Jorge Gomez.

Watch Out For: Severe shoulder pain, rapid swelling, and inability to move the arm.

If It Happens: Rest and physical therapy to heal and gain strength. "Young throwers can also develop an injury to the growth plate with excessive throwing, known as little league shoulder," adds Dr. Gomez. **CFM**

TONYA ELLIS has suffered ACL tears from years of playing tennis.



Preventing Sports Injuries

- Wear cleats when playing on turf and wrap your toes.
- Monitor pitch counts for pitchers. Don't throw excessively during games or in weekly practices.
- Drink plenty of water every 15 to 20 minutes before, during, and after exercise.
- Limit play on hard surfaces, do agility training, and strengthen your quadriceps and hamstrings.
- Wear a helmet when biking, playing football, lacrosse, baseball, and softball.
- Always wear the required protective equipment for contact sports, even in practices or scrimmages.
- Build strength and flexibility through regular conditioning exercises.
- Wear wrist guards when skating, playing football, or rugby.
- Wear appropriate, supportive shoes for the surface you are working out on.
- Wipe down any floor surface that is wet or slippery before you work out.