

Golf safety

A PARENT'S GUIDE FOR GETTING KIDS BACK IN THE GAME



There are 51 million junior golfers from age 5 to 17 in the United States. Golf is a non-contact sport, so athletes are at greater risk of overuse or chronic injuries than acute injuries like a broken bone. This reference guide provides information on the most common golf injuries requiring treatment.

OVERUSE INJURIES

Overuse injuries tend to occur when tissue such as muscle, tendon, bone or cartilage is damaged by repetitive motion activities. Without adequate time for recovery, the tissue cannot adapt to the demands placed on it and further damage is likely. The damage caused by repetitive stress leads to tissue inflammation that causes pain. Overuse injuries, also considered chronic sports injuries, can have symptoms that include:

- Pain when performing the activity or sport.
- Intermittent swelling.
- Decreasing performance.
- Dull pain even at rest.

If the symptoms persist, take your child to see her pediatrician or a pediatric sports medicine physician. In each consecutive season, repetitive maneuvers by certain body parts can lead to fatigue and long-term damage.

SHOULDER PAIN

Golfers can suffer overuse injuries to their shoulders due to repeated swings while holding a club. Common shoulder injuries in golf include:

- **Shoulder Instability** – the shoulder is the most mobile joint in the human body, but is also rather unstable. The ligaments and capsule that hold the shoulder in place may be loose and lead to symptoms in some individuals.
- **Rotator Cuff Tendonitis** – is inflammation and pain caused by repetitive use of the shoulder muscles. This may cause pain when the athlete moves his arm above the head, behind the back or straight out in front.

ELBOW PAIN

Medial epicondylitis or “golfer’s elbow” is a common injury in golfers, and causes tenderness and pain in the inner side of the

elbow (the side where the pinky finger is). This condition is caused by overuse of the muscles to flex the wrist, as occurs on the dominant side during a swing, for example. When these muscles are used repeatedly, they pull at the bony structure on the inner side of the elbow.

Elbow pain should not be ignored. Rest is recommended to allow for sufficient recovery. Ice and stretching of the muscles of the forearm may be used to treat golfer’s elbow.

BACK PAIN

Low back pain is most frequently related to tension, overuse or muscle injury from physically demanding work or exercise such as golf. Swinging the club repeatedly and carrying a golf bag place increased stress on the back. Proper technique while swinging, lifting or carrying a bag is important to prevent problems. A double strapped golf bag is recommended to distribute the weight evenly and allow the athlete to walk with an upright posture.

SUN DAMAGE

Golfers are at risk for sunburn, skin cancer and eye damage from the harmful effects of the sun due to the amount of time spent outside while playing their sport. These problems can be prevented with proper protection.

- Apply generous amounts of sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Pay special attention to your face, nose, ears and arms. The higher the SPF, the greater the protection. It is important to wear sunscreen that has both UVA and UVB protection.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes prior to sun exposure to allow penetration. Re-apply every two hours while you are outdoors.
- Wear a hat. There is also SPF clothing available that provides increased protection.
- Wear sunglasses with UV protection.
- Use a lip balm with sunscreen.

DEHYDRATION

Golfers are at risk of **dehydration** if they don't get enough fluid to replace what is lost through the skin as sweat and through the lungs while breathing. It is important to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after a round of golf. An athlete's performance can be impacted by even mild dehydration.

Athletes should take a water bottle to school and drink between classes and during breaks so that they are well-hydrated before their workout. In addition:

- Water should be readily available when practicing.
- Athletes should drink often – ideally every 15 to 30 minutes.
- Sports drinks are recommended for activities lasting longer than one hour.

continued on back

The Sports Medicine Center at Children's offers the only comprehensive, integrated program in North Texas specifically designed for young and growing athletes. The center goes beyond treatment and rehabilitation of traumatic injuries that occur on the playing field to problems associated with sports participation, including cardiac disorders, asthma and nutrition.

The Children's Sports Medicine Center at the Legacy campus in Plano features a 5,000-square-foot facility complete with diagnostic imaging capabilities, a dedicated sports therapy gym, video motion analysis, isokinetic muscle testing and state-of-the-art rehabilitation equipment – all geared to provide your child with the best medical evaluation by the experts treating young and growing athletes.

Sports Medicine Center

Children's Medical Center at Legacy
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For more information visit
www.childrens.com/sportsmedicine

INJURY PREVENTION

Warming Up — Warm up by swinging at a slower, more relaxed pace and gradually working up to full speed. Warm up both upper and lower body by walking. As the level of activity increases, the muscles burn more oxygen and their temperature rises. When perspiration begins, the muscles are warmed and are ready for a workout.

Stretching — Stretch only after having warmed up; a cold muscle is more likely to tear when stretched. Perform stretches slowly and deliberately, holding each position for at least five seconds. Flexibility in your wrists, shoulders and core (including the back) is important. Incorporate stretching into your workout and golf routine.

Technique — Proper posture and swing mechanics are important for avoiding injury and reducing stress on muscles and joints. Athletes should learn proper swing technique from a golf professional or coach.

Strength Training — Focus on the core area, which means rotational strength and flexibility of the chest, stomach and back. Also maintain good strength and flexibility in the arms and shoulders.

Nutrition — Fuel your body with a meal of protein and carbs before you tee off, then eat a couple of snacks during the round to maintain blood sugar levels. This will provide you with more than enough energy to get through 18 holes.

Safety — Use appropriate equipment. A golf professional can help the athlete identify clubs that are appropriate length, weight, grip size and shaft stiffness based on the age and skill of the player.

- Maintain adequate distance from other golfers to avoid injuries from getting hit by the ball or club. Be aware of golfers playing other holes and stay alert while on the course. Yell "fore" if a shot is heading toward others, and duck and cover your head if you hear another player yell "fore."
- Check the weather forecast before teeing off, and don't play if there is lightning in the area. If you are caught in a storm, avoid standing in the middle of a fairway, near isolated trees or by metal poles. Lie down in a sand trap and wait for the storm to pass if a designated shelter or car is not available.

BUMPS, BRUISES, TWISTS & MUSCLE STRAINS

These can affect all areas of the body. Recommended treatment is the PRICE formula:

Protect the area with a sling or crutches, if necessary.

Rest the injured area.

Ice the injury for 20 minutes at a time. Do not apply the ice directly to the skin.

Compress the injured area with a wrap. Do not pull tightly, as this can cut off circulation.

Elevate the injured area above the heart, if possible.

Kohl's Sports Health and
Wellness Outreach Program

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