



Softball Injuries

Although similar to baseball, softball is played with a larger ball on a smaller field. The games only last seven innings versus nine and the ball is thrown underhand, using a fast or slow pitch. As a non-contact sport, softball has a much lower risk of injury than baseball and other sports. However, shoulder, knee and ankle injuries are common. In fact, thousands of children are seen each year complaining of elbow or shoulder pain often caused by throwing too much.

What types of injuries are most common in softball?

1. Overuse injuries

If you're throwing too hard, too much, too early and without rest, a serious elbow or shoulder injury may occur. This happens when tissues such as muscles and tendons are damaged by repetitive motion activities. If you're having elbow or shoulder pain the day after throwing, or if movement of the joint is painful or restricted compared to the opposite side, see a physician familiar with youth sports injuries immediately.

2. Ankle injuries

In softball, lateral ankle sprains often occur when your foot rolls over the edge of a base or when your foot is stepped on by another player's foot. In some cases, you might hear or feel a pop. Mild sprains require rest, but injuries with persistent swelling, pain or any deformity should be seen by a physician.

3. Concussions

A concussion is a change in brain function due to a traumatic impact. This can occur in softball from a pitch that hits the batter's head or a collision at home plate. Not all players who suffer a concussion will lose consciousness. The athlete should be removed immediately from play and should return to play only when approved by a health care professional.

Signs of a concussion

- Headache
- Loss of balance
- Confusion/Memory problems
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness/Fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Nausea
- Numbness/Tingling
- Light/Noise sensitivity

4. Heat Injuries

Heat injuries, including dehydration, are a concern for youth softball players. If you don't get enough fluid to replace what is lost through sweating, painful cramping of major muscle groups can occur. It is important to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after practices or games. Seek professional treatment if you feel disoriented, are unable to drink or have pale skin.

5. Bumps, Bruises, Twists and Muscle Strains

When playing softball, all types of bumps, bruises or strains can happen. Most of them can be treated with rest, ice, compression and elevation (RICE). Be sure to see a pediatric sports medicine professional if there's deformity, limping that lasts more than 48 hours or if your swelling and pain worsens.

How can softball injuries be prevented?

- Have an annual physical before playing sports
- Observe players especially pitchers for signs of fatigue to prevent overuse injuries
- Perform proper warm-up and cool-down routines before and after practices and games
- Incorporate proper nutrition before, during and after exercise
- Play by the rules of the game
- Wear appropriate properly fitting safety gear, free of heavy wear and tear
- Hydrate to maintain health and minimize cramps
- Speak with a sports medicine professional or athletic trainer about injury concerns or prevention strategies

Need immediate treatment for a softball injury?

The Children's HealthSM Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine offers treatment for all sport-related injuries. Call to book your appointment today. With same-day and next-day appointments, we can get you in and back in the game.

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