

THE SPORTS

Baseball, softball, tennis, swimming

THE INJURIES

Shoulder and elbow sprains and strains

Soccer

Calf, thigh and hip muscle sprains; torn knee tendons

Basketball and running

Tendonitis in knees, shin splints, stress fractures

Gymnastics

Lower back pain and stress fractures

KIDS' HEALTH

→ BY JENNIFER ABBASI

SPORTS SMARTS

Practice makes perfect. But kids who spend too much time training can be at risk for overuse injuries such as torn tendons and stress fractures. Common in adults, these are now showing up in children. "Parents and coaches are pushing kids at an earlier age, hoping they'll become star athletes," says Stephen Rice, M.D., a pediatric sports medicine physician at Jersey Shore University Medical Center who coauthored recent guidelines for young baseball and softball players. "But a growing body has limitations." Reduce your athlete's chances of getting hurt by watching out for:

The risk Pushy coaches
Why it's a problem Kids can have trouble telling authority figures they're being worked too hard.

The solution Check that your child isn't exhausted post-practice, losing her motivation or experiencing lasting soreness.

The risk Too many teams
Why it's a problem Playing the same sport for more than one league increases the odds of taxing a muscle group.

The solution Let your child's coaches know about any other teams she's on so they can adjust her workouts accordingly, like having her throw fewer pitches or swim fewer laps.

The risk Sports camps
Why it's a problem Kids in summer programs may drill five to eight hours a day. This huge increase in activity doesn't allow them to slowly condition their muscles.

The solution Ask the camp for a training schedule

so your child can gradually ramp up his activity three weeks in advance.

The risk Ignored injuries
Why it's a problem Once pain gets intense, recovery takes longer. Better for your child to rest before an injury starts to affect her performance instead of playing through it.

The solution Explain to your kid the importance of telling her coach about pain and scaling back until she feels better.

Moving Images

Two new studies show that kids who watch movies depicting alcohol consumption are more likely to begin drinking or binge drink. To keep kids sober:

▶ **Know the Numbers.** Restrict the number of PG-13 flicks your tween can watch and R-rated movies your teen can see to three a week, even during the summer, advises James Sargent, M.D., a professor of pediatrics at Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth and an author of both studies.

▶ **Create Boundaries.** Make it clear that booze at their age is against your rules.

▶ **Model Behavior.** Enjoy the health benefits of alcohol. Just do it less often in front of your children.



SWEET SURPRISE

Yes, soda has become the biggest single source of added sugar in kids' diets. But overall children still get more of the sweet stuff from food—a whopping 59%. The biggest culprits are treats eaten at home like cookies, doughnuts, candy and gum, followed by jellies, syrups and other toppings. Fastest fix: Cut back on the amount of sugary snacks in your pantry.

