



INJURY PREVENTION: OVERUSE INJURIES IN YOUTH BASEBALL PITCHERS

The competitive nature of youth baseball drives young players to compete year-round. The result? An increased risk for overuse injuries -- especially in baseball pitchers.

When athletes don't take time off, the parts of the body required for repeated movements in throwing, jumping or pivoting don't have enough time to recover. That can be particularly hard on growing bodies.

Children ages 12 to 16 are changing at rates that are faster than any other time during their lives, putting them at the highest risk for overuse injuries.

PITCHES COUNT

Parents and coaches can reduce a child's risk for overuse injuries even more by keeping track of specific motions. For instance, the American Sports Medicine Institute advises adolescent baseball pitchers to pitch no more than 100 innings during a calendar year, and to stop overhead throwing of any kind for four months annually. Recommended limits on the number of pitches athletes should throw per game (two games maximum per week).

ATHLETE'S AGE	DAILY PITCH LIMIT
17-18	105
13-16	95
11-12	85
9-10	75
7-8	50

In addition to limiting the number of pitches thrown per day, pitchers should limit the number of days they throw per week. The daily pitch limit represents the maximum number of pitches for one day, but pitchers should not throw at these levels for multiple days in a row. Pitchers need to rest their arms between games.

MULTIPLE SPORTS IS THE BEST GAME PLAN

Year-round specialization in a single sport at an early age can affect musculoskeletal development and coordination. There is value to cross-training and playing different sports; and the risk of injury is lessened in the long-term.

DOWN TIME IS GOOD TIME

Players should incorporate at least one to two rest days each week, and take a break from all sports for one month each year.



For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 314.454.KIDS, or visit StLouisChildrens.org/youngathlete.

The above information was provided by Dr. Jeffrey Nepple, Washington University orthopedic surgeon and pediatric sports medicine specialist at St. Louis Children's Hospital. American Sports Medicine Institute: www.asmi.org Little League: www.littleleague.org

Young Athlete Center

