

Sports Injury Guidelines

Preventing Baseball Injuries

Introduction

Injuries in young athletes are on the rise, but elbow and shoulder injuries in children are on the verge of becoming an epidemic. Damage or tear to the ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) is the most common injury suffered and is often caused by pitchers throwing too much.

Risks

This ligament is the main stabilizer of the elbow for the motions of pitching.

How Can Overuse Baseball Injuries Be Prevented?

Some tips to keep you in the game include:

- Warm up properly by stretching, running, and easy gradual throwing.
- Rotate playing other positions besides pitcher.
- Concentrate on age appropriate pitching.
- Adhere to pitch count guidelines, such as those established by Little League Baseball. (see tables)
- Avoid pitching on multiple teams with overlapping seasons.
- Don't pitch with elbow or shoulder pain, if the pain persists, see a doctor.
- Don't pitch on consecutive days.
- Don't play year-round.
- Never use a radar gun.
- Communicate regularly how your arm is feeling and if there is pain.
- Develop skills that are age appropriate.
- Emphasize control, accuracy, and good mechanics.
- Master the fastball first and the change-up second, before considering breaking pitches.
- Speak with a sports medicine professional or athletic trainer if you have any concerns about baseball injuries or baseball injury prevention strategies.

Maximum Pitch Counts

Age	Pitches/Game
7-8	50
9-10	75
11-12	85
13-16	95
17-18	105

Source: Little League Baseball

Rest Periods Required

Ages 14 and Under	Ages 15-18	Required # of Rest Days
66+	76+	4 calendar days
51-65	61-75	3 calendar days
36-50	46-60	2 calendar days
21-35	31-45	1 calendar day
1-20	1-30	None

Source: Little League Baseball

