

Careful Sportsmanship

By Shaleek Wilson



Dr. John A. Schlechter
CHOC Orthopedic Surgeon

Dr. Schlechter completed his orthopedic surgery residency at Riverside County Regional Medical Center, where he is the director of orthopedic education and research. He completed a pediatric orthopedic and scoliosis fellowship at Rady's Children's Hospital San Diego as well as a post-fellowship preceptorship in sports medicine and arthroscopy at the Orthopedic Specialty Institute in Orange, CA.

Dr. Schlechter's philosophy of care: "I try to treat the child and not the parent, and make sure the athletes understand their conditions and the rationale of why they might need to have some rest and what the potential unwanted outcomes could be if they don't get rest."

EDUCATION:
New York College of Osteopathic Medicine

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:
Orthopedic Surgery

CHILDREN, SPORTS AND INJURIES

"One of the most common sports injuries I see every week is pain in an extremity from chronic repetitive stress, whether it is at the elbow, the wrist, the ankle, the knee or the foot," says Dr. Schlechter. "Those are definitely the most common sports-related injuries in children that are less traumatic and non-operative, most of the time. They can be prevented by activity modification, rest, ice, anti-inflammatories and a good stretching program," he recommends.

COMMON SPORTS SENSE

A general rule of thumb to reduce injury, says Dr. Schlechter, is for children to not play one sport year-round. They should engage in multiple sports. "For instance, if your child is a baseball player, they should probably cross-train and participate in maybe football, track, and basketball instead of baseball year-round, with a three-month period of rest. That's a good preventative strategy," he suggests. Another piece of advice: Don't play through pain.



TAKE TIME TO HEAL ... FULLY

"In general, most musculoskeletal injuries, for them to be fully healed, can take 12 to 16 weeks. Most children start feeling better after resting two to four weeks. They tend to go back to sports too soon. Definitely take the full time to recover," he says.

GAME GEAR

"Every football season and the start of soccer season, I'll see a flurry of patients with foot and ankle pain and those are usually growth plate-related conditions, stress injuries to the bone of the feet," he says. Dr. Schlechter suggests saving the cleats for game situations only, not every day conditioning.



Keeping Your Athlete in Top Shape

When it comes to sports-related injuries, the experts at the CHOC Children's Orthopaedic Institute know that children aren't just small adults. Special training and experience in pediatric sports medicine allow our specialists to appropriately treat the medical needs unique to children and teens. Our specialists work one-on-one with each patient to develop an individualized diagnosis and treatment plan—with an emphasis on preserving future growth and function, and a safe return to play.

Find out more at
www.choc.org/sports



3.5 million

NUMBER OF CHILDHOOD SPORTS INJURIES IN THE U.S. EACH YEAR

3 months

AMOUNT OF TIME CHILDREN SHOULD REST BETWEEN SPORTS ACTIVITIES

15 to 20

NUMBER OF MINUTES YOU SHOULD APPLY ICE TO INJURY



Experts in: Orthopaedics

See how to stretch to help avoid injuries at www.choc.org/health.

