



PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT SPORTS MEDICINE UPDATE



Shoulder and Elbow Injuries in Youth Baseball

by Drew E. Warnick, M.D.

Shoulder and elbow injuries in young baseball players is on the rise. Thousands of young baseball players are seen every year with shoulder and/or elbow pain caused by pitchers throwing too much.

If a young athlete is throwing too hard, too much, or too early, a serious elbow or shoulder injury may occur. If a young athlete complains of elbow or shoulder pain the day after throwing, or movement of the elbow or shoulder is painful or restricted, consult a physician immediately.



Overuse injuries— especially those related to the elbow and shoulder— are preventable! Some useful tips to keep your child in the game include:

- Proper warm-up; which includes stretching, running, easy and gradual throwing
- Rotate positions while on the field
- Concentrate on age-appropriate pitching
- Adhere to pitching count guidelines
- Avoid pitching on multiple teams with overlapping seasons
- Don't pitch while you have elbow or shoulder pain
- Communicate regularly about how your arm feels
- Emphasize control, accuracy, and good mechanics
- Talk with a sports medicine trainer or sports medicine physician if you have any concerns about injuries

Age (years)	Maximum pitches/ game	Maximum games/ week	Maximum pitches/ week	Maximum pitches/ season	Maximum pitches/ year
8 to 10	50	2	75	1000	2000
11 to 12	75	2	100	1000	3000
13 to 14	75	2	125	1000	3000
15 to 16	90	2	-	-	-
17 to 18	105	2	-	-	-

Pitches in a day	Rest
51	5 days of rest, and a game, must be observed
41 to 60	4 days of rest, and a game, must be observed
21 to 40	3 days of rest must be observed
1 to 20	1 day of rest is required

Pitch	Age (Years)
Fastball	8 ± 2
Change-Up	10 ± 3
Curveball	14 ± 2
Knuckleball	15 ± 3
Slider	16 ± 2
Forkball	16 ± 2
Screwball	17 ± 2

*5 pitches maximum between innings; 12 to 15 before game

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