

## Youth Sport Injury Prevention

Forsyth County Parks and Recreation, believes it is important to encourage children to get the exercise they need, build strength and learn teamwork. Athletics are incredible settings and tools for promoting health and wellness beyond the competition on the field or court. Youth athletics provide vital life lessons that help shape young people into productive members of society. While the benefits outweigh the risks, youth athletics can sometimes lead to injuries. Forsyth County Parks & Recreation believes that reducing injuries enables athletes to reach their full potential and stay on a lifetime path to better health and a happy life.

While, our goal is to provide the safest facilities and programs possible, ultimately parents and guardians are most responsible for ensuring the well-being of their child. We encourage parents and guardians to stay up to date on the latest research regarding injury prevention.

It is our intent to protect the health of young athletes and to help educate parents, guardians, and coaches, regarding concussions, heat illness, and proper hydration with information under our “General Policy” tab on our website.

Over-training among young athletes seems to be a growing problem. Many children participate in sports year-round and play on multiple teams simultaneously. Both are risk factors for overuse injuries.

- Risk of overuse injuries in young athletes is higher than adults because their bones are less capable of handling stress.
- Children and teens should take time off from organized or structured sports participation one or two days per week to rest their bodies.
- Allow scheduled breaks from training and competition every two to three months while focusing on other activities and cross-training to prevent loss of skill or conditioning.
- Teach athletes to be in tune with their bodies for cues to slow down or to alter their training methods.
- Advise athletes that the weekly training time, number of repetitions, or total distance should not increase by more than 10 percent each week.
- Stay well hydrated. Dehydration leads to fatigue and increased chance of injury.
- Learn and follow proper skill techniques and mechanics for your sport.
- Keep your child focused on the important parts of sport: fun with friends, developing new skills, and learning sportsmanship.

An example of “over-training” or “over-use” would be a young baseball pitcher, pitching too much or too often. To avoid such issues, young baseball pitchers, parents, and coaches should consider the following:

- Rotate playing other positions besides pitcher
- Avoid pitching on multiple teams with overlapping seasons
- Do not pitch with any elbow or shoulder pain
- Never use a radar gun, as it encourages over-throwing
- Emphasize control, accuracy, and good mechanics
- Do not rotate between pitcher-catcher or catcher-pitcher in the same game

Classifications of Tendinosis or Over-use injuries:

Stage 1: Pain after activity, no functional impairment

Stage 2: Pain during and after activity with minimal functional impairment

Stage 3: Pain during and after activity that persists throughout the day, significant functional impairment

Stage 4: Significant functional impairment with all daily activities