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InMotion

SPRING 2009



Simple Steps Prevent Skin Infections

Athletic related skin conditions are a common complaint in doctor's and athletic trainer's offices. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), skin infections are the most common cause of practice time loss in wrestlers, accounting for more than 17 percent of all reported conditions. There can be many different causes for an athlete's rash or infection, so early diagnosis and treatment is key to a quick return to play. It's also important for athletes, coaches, and trainers to take appropriate steps to prevent infection, including:

- Keeping wounds covered
- Washing hands with alcohol-based hand rubs
- Not sharing towels, razors, clothing, or uniforms
- Disinfecting non-clothing items with bleach diluted at 1:100
- Washing soiled clothing in hot water
- Cleaning equipment with chlorhexidine soap

For more information on athletic skin infections and how to prevent them visit AOSM's Web site at www.sportsmed.org and click on the newsroom to view a presentation from our summer webinar.

Don't Let Allergy Sniffles Derail Your Exercise

After a cold winter getting outside to exercise sounds like a great idea, but for some taking a step outdoors when the flowers start blooming, can create a frenzy of sneezing, sniffles, itchy eyes, and wheezing.

But allergists say that most people can still exercise outside without sacrificing allergy relief. One good rule to follow is to

avoid outdoor exercise when the pollen counts are highest, usually between 5 a.m. and

10 a.m. There are several Internet sites, your local

TV news, and newspapers which detail pollen

counts each day.

Other workouts that are more

"allergy friendly" include yoga, swimming, Tai

Chi, stretching, and weight training.



Weather is also another key factor when determining your exercise routine. Any change in wind conditions, temperature, humidity, or precipitation may increase or decrease the pollen count. Rainy, cooler days are usually the lowest pollen count days.

Also, discovering your personal pollen tolerance can make a difference. According to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), monitoring the pollen levels and keeping track of the point at which you experience symptoms may help you plan activities and know when and where you are least likely to experience symptoms.

Ironically, it may not be until you get back indoors that an allergic reaction takes place. The extra adrenalin produced when you are working out, temporarily dampens the allergic response. About an hour after your workout is actually when the pollen in the air might incite a reaction. You can reduce your risk of symptoms by taking a shower, washing your hair, and putting on clean clothes after exercising.

For more information on exercising and allergies, visit the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology at www.acaai.org.

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Get Reacquainted with Your Toes

Flexibility is a key component to maintaining a healthy body, yet many do not make stretching a priority. Stretching should be included in both the warm-up and cool-down segments of a work-out routine. When joints and the surrounding muscles and tissues are flexible, the body has a better range of motion, possibly minimizing injury and increasing circulation. A lack of flexibility may also cause joint stiffness, poor posture, and movement limitations.

When adding stretching to your workout routine, keep the following in mind:

1. Warm up muscles before stretching. An aerobic activity at an easy pace (i.e. running in place, cycling in a low gear) is best.
2. Standing stretches are ideal during warm up. Floor stretches are best during cool down.
3. Do not bounce when stretching. Instead, stretch slowly and hold for 15–30 seconds. Remember to breathe and relax while holding the stretch.
4. Stretch to the point of tension, but if you feel pain, let up on the stretch.

Stretching can be a good team-building exercise or a way to gather your thoughts prior to exercise.

“While we cannot say whether stretching will prevent you from getting hurt, it is an important aspect of every workout. Along with improvement in flexibility, stretching can be a good team-building exercise or a way to gather your thoughts prior to exercise,” said AOSSM member, Dan Soloman, MD, of the Naval Medical Center, San Diego.

Simple stretches have been shown to produce good results, but if you are looking for structured classes that promote flexibility, then Pilates or yoga might be for you. Pilates focuses on core stability by utilizing a mat and resistance tools, and includes a substantial amount of stretching. Yoga participants hold poses that encourage flexibility, strength, and balance. Most gyms, YMCAs, and park districts offer Pilates and yoga classes.

To receive a free tip sheet on flexibility and stretching, visit the patient education section on www.sportsmed.org or e-mail your name and address to inmotion@aossm.org. Reference “flexibility and stretching” in the subject line.



Sideline First Aid Kit

With the coming warmer weather and longer days, friends and family will be returning to the field of sport. Whether spring means time for basketball, soccer, or football, minor injuries are bound to occur. Having a basic first aid kit immediately available can provide pain relief and help with a more rapid return to play. The first aid kit should be in a brightly colored, well-marked bag on the sideline and include:

- Instant cold packs
- Adhesive bandages of assorted shapes and sizes
- Blister care
- Ace bandages
- Latex gloves
- Antiseptic wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Sterile gauze bandages
- Sterile gauze roll
- Sterile saline bottle
- Hydrogen peroxide bottle
- Athletic tape
- Foam underwrap
- Paramedic scissors
- Finger splints
- Ammonia inhalant
- First aid booklet
- CPR instructions
- Water-tight bags to keep items dry

A more comprehensive first aid kit may be required or recommended depending on the event or risks expected. A cellular or regular telephone can also be a valuable resource and should always be readily available.

News from *The American Journal of Sports Medicine (AJSM)* and *Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach*

Availability of AEDs at Athletic Events Key to Saving Lives

Utilizing an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) as part of a comprehensive emergency action plan (EAP) at an athletic event can mean the difference between life and death for an athlete or spectator experiencing Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA), confirms a study published in the January/February issue of *Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach*.



The study reports that access to AEDs and early defibrillation achieves survival rates of 41 to 74 percent, if CPR and defibrillation takes place within three to five minutes of arrest. “The most important factor in SCA survival is quick access to an on-site AED. Easy access gives a trained professional the extra minutes they need to save lives,” says lead author, Justin D. Rothmier, MD, from The Sports Medicine Clinic in Seattle, Washington.

Baseline Assessment Helps Better Determine Concussion Signs

Testing for concussion symptoms before athletic participation may help clinicians better evaluate issues after an injury, according to a study published in the January/February issue of *Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach*.

The study evaluated self-reported symptom checklists and concussion history questionnaires completed during preseason clinical testing by more than 8,900 high school and college athletes at 130 high schools and colleges from around the country. “Our data suggests that athletes with a history of concussion, experience prolonged concussion-linked symptoms. When a student is having difficulty concentrating in conjunction with a headache and fatigue, their performance in school may be poor,” explains lead author, Johna Register-Mihalik, doctoral candidate at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



For more information on these studies visit www.sportshealthjournal.org or www.sportsmed.org.

Too Much Play May Take Kids Out of the Action Early

As more and more kids are becoming involved in competitive sports at younger ages, the rates of injuries are dramatically increasing. Overuse injuries can include many things from strains and sprains to growth plate issues to even stress fractures. Although overuse injuries cannot be completely prevented, there are a few actions that can be taken to limit their occurrence.

Cross-Training/Avoidance of One Sport Specialization

Today, there is significant pressure on young athletes to specialize in one sport. Although this may lead to greater accomplishment in one sport, it can also lead to a greater chance of injury because there is less of a chance to recover between seasons.

“Young athletes should alternate between sports that stress different joints. For instance, baseball pitchers whose elbow and shoulder joints are prone to injury should participate in sports such as basketball or running during the off-season,” said AOSSM member, Grant Jones, MD, of the Ohio State Sports Medicine Center.

Rest

Athletes who perform consecutive days of high level training are more prone to injury. Resting muscles between hard training days allows

the body to recover before being stressed again. Young athletes also should not play through pain as this may be an early warning sign of a developing serious injury.

Proper Physical Conditioning

Young athletes need to properly condition for a sport, and they need to gradually work into a new sport. Many injuries can be prevented by following a regular conditioning program for a particular sport. A program can be set up with the help of coaches, certified athletic trainers, and strength and conditioning coaches.

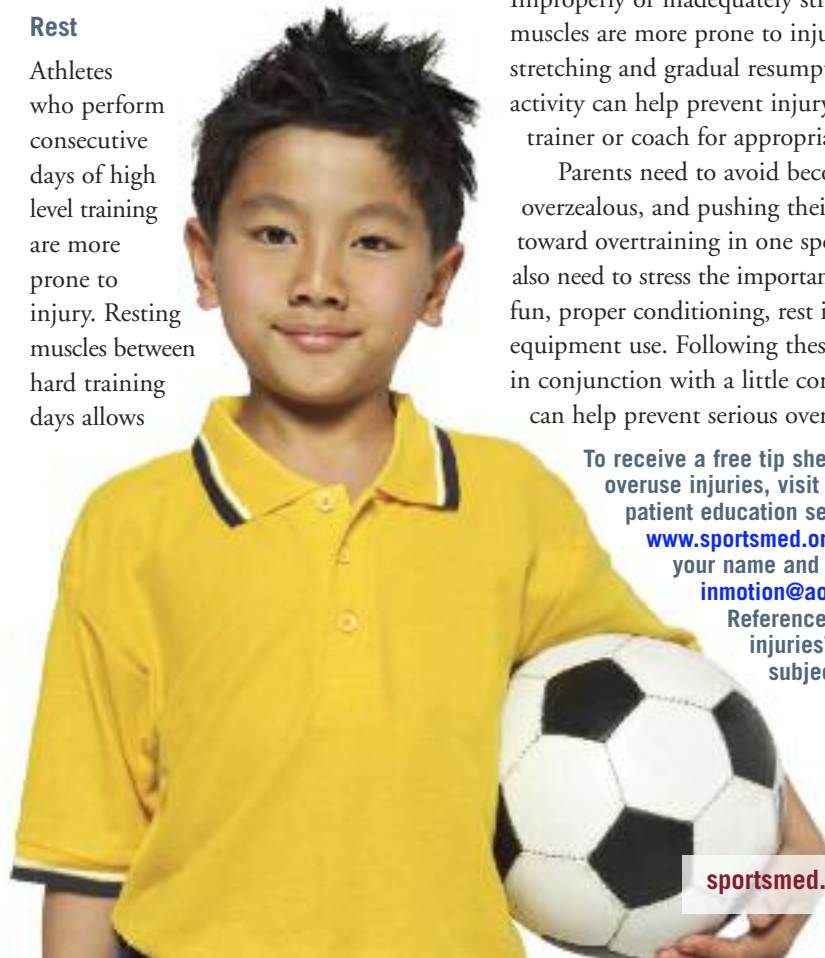
Appropriate Equipment

Many injuries result from the use of over-used, outdated equipment. For instance, runners need to make sure that their shoes are not “run-down” and that they are appropriate for their running style and lower extremity biomechanics. This can be accomplished with the help of certified athletic trainers, physical therapists, and/or physicians.

Adequate Warm-Up

Improperly or inadequately stretched muscles are more prone to injury. Sport-stretching and gradual resumption of an activity can help prevent injury. Talk to a trainer or coach for appropriate stretches.

Parents need to avoid becoming too overzealous, and pushing their children toward overtraining in one sport. Parents also need to stress the importance of having fun, proper conditioning, rest intervals, and equipment use. Following these few tips in conjunction with a little common sense can help prevent serious overuse injuries.



To receive a free tip sheet on overuse injuries, visit the patient education section on www.sportsmed.org or e-mail your name and address to inmotion@aossm.org. Reference “overuse injuries” in the subject line.

Postmaster: Please deliver between March 1 and 7.

As a world leader in sports medicine education, the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM) is pleased to provide you with this complimentary copy of *In Motion: Active Living for All Ages*. We have designed *In Motion* to highlight relevant information for multiple age groups, from exercise and rehabilitation tips to nutrition and psychology.

This important educational tool is published quarterly and can be purchased in bulk for a nominal fee for distribution in waiting rooms and other public areas. As an added incentive to purchase bulk copies, AOSSM is offering a "buy three, get one free" offer. Purchase 50 or more copies of any three issues (Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter 2009) and you'll receive the fourth set of issues free!

For more information, please visit our Web site at www.sportsmed.org, send an e-mail to inmotion@aossm.org or call us directly at 847.292.4900 for more information on ordering your bulk copies.

Executive Editor
Bruce Reider, MD

Managing Editor
Lisa Weisenberger

Contributors
Bryan Emmerson, MD
Rachel Holmes
Grant Jones, MD
Peter Muench, MD
Dan Solomon, MD



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BOMET
SPORTS MEDICINE

Prevent Tennis Injuries and Ace Your Game

Hitting a few balls with friends seems relatively harmless, but tennis can place undue pressure and stress on an individual's wrist, elbow, and shoulder. One of the most common injuries is "tennis elbow" where an athlete experiences pain at the outside of the elbow. This injury is usually caused by overuse.

"Using the right equipment is vital to preventing injury. Larger, stiffer racquets with tighter strings cause more force at the elbow and may increase chances of injury," says Peter Muench, MD, of the Orthopaedic Center in Rockville, MD.

To prevent tennis elbow the following tips may help:

- Use a racquet with a larger grip and more padding. If an athlete's thumb and index finger can overlap the tennis handle, it is too small.
- Use a two-handed backstroke to absorb energy from the swing.
- Avoid playing in the rain or with wet, heavy tennis balls.
- Exercise forearms regularly to increase strength and flexibility.

A simple tennis injury prevention program, performed 3 to 4 times a week should include the following exercises:



- Flexing and extending the wrist against light resistance, such as an exercise band
- Rotating the forearm back and forth against light resistance, while holding a light dumbbell at one end
- Chair press-ups—while sitting, grab the sides of a stable chair just outside your hips and push your body weight up off the chair.

With proper equipment, good technique, and preventive exercises, tennis players can ace their fitness and gain a lifetime of enjoyment from the game.

To receive a free tip sheet on tennis elbow, visit the patient education section on www.sportsmed.org or e-mail your name and address to inmotion@aossm.org. Reference "tennis elbow" in the subject line.