

UF HEALTH ORTHOPAEDICS AND SPORTS MEDICINE INSTITUTE

Soccer Injuries in Adolescent and High School Athletes

Epidemiology

- Soccer is the world's most popular sport with a significant number of players younger than 18 years old.
- As of 2018, there are 11,924,000 soccer participants in the U.S. with more than 6 million participants between the ages of 6-17.
- 42.3% of female soccer players are between the ages of 6 and 12.
- With such popularity comes injury.

High school athletes sustain more than 1.4 million injuries annually with a significant portion of soccer injuries occurring in the lower extremities.

Common injuries in youth, adolescent and high school soccer players include:

Lower extremities

- Ankle injuries including sprains
- Anterior cruciate ligament
- Hamstring sprains and tears
- Hip and groin injuries
- Shin splints (medial tibial stress syndrome)
- Stress fractures, specifically to the tibia and pubic bones

Upper extremities

- Shoulder dislocations
- Wrist sprains and fractures from falling on an extended arm

Head and Neck

- Bruises
- Concussions
- Cuts/lacerations
- Neck sprains

Heading and concussions?

- The relationship between heading and concussion remains unclear. However, growing evidence suggests repetitive heading may be linked to future cognitive problems
- There is no definitive evidence that wearing headgear of any kind or using a mouthguard will prevent concussions.
- There are concerns that headgear may cause more aggressive heading and head challenges, leading to increased risk of injury.

Prevention and treatment of injuries

- ACL prevention training programs i.e. FIFA 11+
- Have a pre-season physical examination
- Minimize overuse as more than 10% of injuries can occur without proper rest
- Hydrate adequately — waiting until you are thirsty is often too late!
- Stop and see a medical professional if you suffer an injury
- Speak with a sports medicine professional or athletic trainer if you have any concerns about injuries or prevention strategies



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5. DiStefano LJ, Padua DA, DiStefano MJ, Marshall SW. Influence of age, sex, technique, and exercise program on movement patterns after an anterior cruciate ligament injury prevention program in youth soccer players. Am J Sports Med. 2009 Mar;37(3):495-505.
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8. McLeod TC. National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Prevention of Pediatric Overuse Injuries: position statement. Journal of Athletic Training. 2011;46(2):206-220.
9. Levy ML. Concussions in soccer: a current understanding. World Neurosurg. 2012 Nov;78(5):535-44.
10. Niedfeldt MW. Head injuries, heading, and the use of headgear in soccer. Curr Sports Med Rep. 2011 Nov-Dec;10(6):324-9.

How do I schedule an appointment to be evaluated for a soccer-related injury?

Please contact us at the sports injury hotline at 352.273.7001 to schedule an appointment with one of our sports medicine specialists.

OSMI and UF Health Sports Medicine Providers

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