

Aches & Pains of a Growing Athlete

What can you do when your gymnast comes home with aches & pains? A lot of times an athlete may complain of chronic pain in certain parts of her body. Most often, the pain may develop in their heels, wrists or knees. They probably never injured these areas, but still feel some "achiness" during workouts. A lack of strength, flexibility or growth may be the cause of most of their discomfort.

There are several things the coaches will do to help ease the athlete's pain, or weakness. Most often exercises related to the pain, along with specific stretching is given. For example, if an athlete develops pain in her heels, and is at an age where she is "growing", then the athlete may have Sever's. We as coaches will not be able to diagnose an injury- but can provide some insight on the problem, and recommend icing, strength/flexibility exercises. We will recommend you see a doctor if necessary.

The following articles give you a brief description of 2 common discomforts:

Osgood-Schlatter (say: "oz-good shlot-ter") is one of the most common causes of knee pain in young athletes. It causes swelling, pain and tenderness just below the knee, over the shin bone (also called the tibia). Osgood-Schlatter commonly affects children who are having a growth spurt during their pre-teen or teenage years. One or both knees may be affected.

Sever's syndrome is a painful heel condition that affects growing adolescents between the ages of nine and 14. In this condition, the growing part of the heel bone grows faster than the tendon that connects on the back of the heel. This tightens up the tendon and creates tension where it attaches to the heel. Eventually, the tension causes the area to become inflamed and painful. Fortunately, the condition is not serious. It is usually only temporary. Youth who play running and jumping sports are most prone to this problem. Sever's syndrome used to happen mostly in boys. But with more girls playing sports, boys and girls are now affected equally. Both heels hurt in more than half the cases.

We recommend the following doctors if needed:

Surgeons

Dr. James Bicos – Performance Orthopedics

Dr. Joe Guettler, MD / Dr. Pete Biglin, DO

Ph #: (248)988-8085

24255 West 13 Mile Road, Suite 100

Bingham Farms, MI 48025

Arthur Manoli MD –Foot & Ankle

Margaret Chilvers

Ph #: (248) 858-6773

4555 Woodward Avenue, Suite 503

Pontiac, MI 48341