



**What types
of sport
injuries can
occur? ►**

There are two kinds of sport injuries — *acute* injuries and *overuse* injuries. Children have always suffered from acute injuries such as sprained ankles and broken arms. Today, however, because of intensive sport training at younger levels by some children, doctors are seeing a dramatic increase in overuse injuries.

Overuse injuries are caused by repeating the same techniques over and over again. Children may, in fact, be more susceptible to overuse injuries than adults because constantly repeating similar movements at a time when they are growing can create muscle imbalances around the joints.

ACUTE INJURIES

Broken bones in the upper body are common in children because their arm and wrist muscles are frequently weak. A simple fall can result in a fracture if the muscles aren't strong enough to absorb the impact for the bone. Even highly active children, who are fit from playing sports such as running or soccer, may not be physically fit in the upper body. Orthopedic surgeon William MacIntyre recommends that children be encouraged to do push-ups and chin-ups to strengthen muscles and prevent injury.

OVERUSE INJURIES

Children in organized sport who practise a technique over and over again risk developing overuse injuries. These commonly occur in the shoulder, elbow, knee, and ankle joints. Little League pitchers, for example, risk developing pain in their throwing arms.

One of the most common overuse injuries is patello-femoral knee pain, accounting for nearly one half of all knee pain seen in adolescents. Sport physiotherapist Lorraine Hendry of Ottawa, an expert in patello-femoral knee syndrome, says that children can develop pain around the knee cap in any sport where their bent knee moves against resistance. The syndrome is common during growth spurts when an imbalance in the muscle groups controlling the knee cap makes it tilt and rub against the wrong side of the thigh bone. The syndrome is often overlooked, but it can be corrected with early treatment such as proper stretching and strengthening exercises. If not promptly treated, the syndrome can lead to more serious knee injuries.