OVERUSE INJURIES IN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES

Recognition, Treatment and Prevention: A Team Approach



The Problem

Overuse injuries account for <u>half</u> of all sports injuries in middle school and high school.

(Source: Safe Kids USA)

 If recognized early enough and treated properly, the severity of these injuries can be reduced significantly



What is Overuse?

Overuse is considered excessive and repeated use that results in injury to the bones, muscles or tendons involved in the action.

 As opposed to acute injuries, these happen over time and are a result of repetitive micro-trauma to the bones, muscles and tendons.

Examples: Tendonitis (Achilles, tennis elbow, jumper's knee), "Shin Splints"



Why Do They Occur?

- Physical stress on the body is a beneficial way of making bones and tissues stronger (remodeling)
- Remodeling is the breaking down and re-building of tissue in order to get stronger through exercise
- If the breakdown of tissue is occurring faster than the re-building, overuse injury occurs



Recognizing Overuse: The Team

- Athletes
- Parents
- Coaches
- Health Care Professionals (ATC, MD, PT, etc.)



Treatment

- Cutting back intensity, frequency or duration of activity (NOT necessarily removing from activity)
 - Cross-training or less-stressful activities to maintain fitness level
- Learning proper training and technique from coaches and ATCs.



Treatment

- Proper warm-ups/cool-downs before AND after
- Treating minor aches and pains with ice and antiinflammatories (Motrin, Advil, Ibuprofen)
- Appropriate stretching/strengthening exercises to restore balance between tissue breakdown and remodeling



Prevention

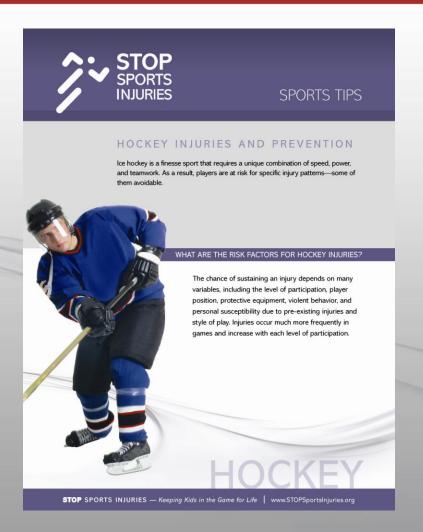
- Allow sufficient recovery time between stressful physical activities (Have them "listen" to their bodies)
- Incorporate strength training/flexibility training (*Pre-season)
- Educate athletes on proper nutrition and hydration
- * Encourage kids to speak with an athletic trainer, coach or physician if they are having progressive pain







Educational Content



- Sports tips
 - Sport specific information
- Video podcasts
- Specific educational tip sheets focused on various audiences
 - Parents
 - Athletes
 - Coaches
 - Healthcare providers