

Prairie



Shoulder, Elbow & Hand Center

Preventing Injuries in Throwers

The most important recommendations for preventing injuries in young athletes are to avoid breaking pitches (slides, curveballs) until skeletal maturity and to avoid year-round baseball. The athlete should have a minimum of 2-3 months of complete rest from throwing per year.

Early recognition and diagnosis of an injury and immediate cessation from throwing is the key to preventing permanent damage to the tissues in the shoulder and elbow. Rest, followed by a professionally designed rehabilitation program that addresses global functional deficits (core stability, lower extremity strength, and flexibility), scapular stabilization, rotator cuff strengthening, and normalization of the gleno-humeral total arc of motion through posterior shoulder stretching are critical to help the thrower return to symptom free play.

Following examination by a qualified health professional a treatment program will be outlined. Anti-inflammatory medications can be coupled with rest and physical therapy to decrease inflammation in the injured shoulder or elbow. Improving strength and endurance of the wrist flexors and the forearm pronator muscles, particularly the flexor carpi ulnaris are important for secondary stabilization of the elbow to prevent and rehabilitate valgus instability. Once pain and inflammation have subsided and the clinical examination has returned to normal, an interval throwing program can be started in conjunction with continued rehabilitation.

Recommended Maximum Number of Pitches* (We recommend that parents count their child's pitches.)

Age (yrs)	Maximum Pitches per Game	Maximum Games per Week
8-10	50	2
11-12	65	2
13-14	75	2
15-16	90	2
17-18	105	2

Recommended Minimum Rest After Pitching*

Age (yrs)	Number of Pitches			
	1 Day of Rest	2 Days of Rest	3 Days of Rest	4 Days of Rest
8-10	20	35	45	50
11-12	25	35	55	60
13-14	30	35	55	70
15-16	30	40	60	80
17-18	30	40	60	90

*Modified pitch count guidelines from the USA Baseball Medical and Safety Advisory Committee