

PHYSICIAN'S CORNER

Elbow pain is a common presenting complaint of the young throwing athlete. Athletes and their families often arrive in the office having scoured the Internet and have informed questions about elbow pain caused by throwing.

Some common questions are:

- Is it Little League elbow?
- Do we need Tommy John surgery?
- When do we schedule our MRI?
- Can this be treated arthroscopically?



Randolph B. Cohen,
MD, FACS, FAAP

There is no way to make the determination about the cause of an athlete's elbow pain without a thorough physical exam and an X-ray. In fact, only occasionally is an MRI required. Young athletes are prone to develop a number of elbow problems that simply don't occur in the adult population. The most common cause of elbow pain is medial epicondylitis, which is commonly known as Little League elbow. However, this condition can be a result of participation in a number of sports, not just baseball.

The treatment for this condition varies based on the severity and the age of the athlete, and ranges from activity modification, therapy, pitch coaching, immobilization, to casting, and even surgery. There are also a number of more serious conditions that masquerade as Little League elbow; however, a proper diagnosis cannot be made without an exam by an experienced orthopedist and imaging studies interpreted by a doctor who treats and understands the adolescent population.

I have treated children in the tri-county area for three decades and it is true that the incidence of this problem is increasing. Don't ignore a painful elbow. Although it may turn out to be a minor problem, don't let it prevent you from reaching the Major Leagues.

For more information, log on to our website at u18sportsmedicine.com or contact us at (954) 538-5500. U18 Sports Medicine is part of Memorial Healthcare System and affiliated with Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital.

TESTIMONIAL

My experience with U18 physical therapy was great. They do an amazing job working with each patient, focusing on the injury and the severity of the injury. Working with Whitney was awesome as well. At U18, they don't just treat you like a patient, they treat you like family and at the end, you do feel like family. I would recommend U18 to anyone who needs their help. They are an amazing team to work with.

- Lisa
Patient of U18
Bethune Cookman University

