

Originally Printed in: I.C.P.A. Newsletter September/October 1998

Kids and Sports

Injuries to children's spines are not unique to contact sports like football or martial arts. They are also seen in non-contact sports like gymnastics and competitive cheerleading. Injuries to the pediatric spine vary according to the specific mechanism of injury.

Subluxations, fractures or failure of fusion of secondary ossification centers can result from head impacts as experienced in football or martial arts, or from falling on the child's feet or buttocks as in gymnastics or cheerleading. Development of the normal spinal curves will assist in dissipating compressive forces or loads. However, athletics may induce concussive forces the body cannot adapt to thus resulting in vertebral subluxation complexes.

T. K. Videman, M.D.¹ from the University of Helsinki in 1987 found that the slightest hypomobility in diarthrodial joints (facet joints) would cause joint degeneration in 5-7 days, which becomes irreversible in 2-3 weeks. Following 5 weeks of joint fixation, 18 months of care was required for optimal healing which was almost always incomplete. The sooner we as chiropractors can care for the child athlete, and correct his or her subluxation, the less likely they are to have life long patterns of ill health and who better than the chiropractor to care for these little athletes.

Emmett Smith's quote "playing in a football game is like being in 30-40 care accidents" and then I multiply that by the 10 games the kids have each season. I also use this opportunity to show them the benefit of chiropractic care for the athletes, both pre and post game. This clinic is held in my office so the coaches, parents and players have the opportunity to see it first hand.

Whether the children are participating in contact or non-contact sports, a proper chiropractic evaluation by a qualified pediatric chiropractor can keep them in the game and help to minimize if not prevent injuries leading to vertebral subluxations.