

Children's Health

Child's Play: An Update on Pediatric Urological Health

(NAPSA)—Urological health is usually discussed in relation to adults, yet it is extremely important to monitor in children as well. Dr. Anthony Atala, a pediatric urologist at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in North Carolina, discusses a urological concern that parents of young boys should be aware of—testicular injury.

Q: What are some causes and symptoms of testicular injury?

A: Any kind of trauma, such as falling on a bicycle bar, being struck by a sports ball, getting kicked or engaging in strenuous exercise can result in testicular injury. Two of the main symptoms that should be monitored closely are significant testicular pain and swelling. Young boys may be reluctant to tell a parent about a groin injury, so if you notice your child experiencing discomfort be sure to encourage him to tell you what may have happened, so you can monitor the injury and seek treatment within an appropriate amount of time.

Q: If a child suffers a trauma to the groin area, what should a parent do first?

A: Parents should immediately assess the child for outward signs of injury, such as broken skin, bleeding or rapid swelling. If the skin is torn or if there is significant bleeding or rapid swelling, go straight to the emergency room. If bleeding is slight or if the skin is unbroken, you can apply an ice pack to the area (be sure to wrap it in a towel first—that area is extremely sensitive) and continue to monitor any swelling.

Q: Why the emergency room? Why not the pediatrician or a urologist's office?

A: Testicular injury can be very serious and result in testicular loss if not treated in time. Blunt trauma to the area could lead to a bruised



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testicle, internal bleeding in the scrotum, testicular fracture or testicular rupture. Slapstick comedy may make groin injuries seem amusing, but they are no laughing matter. Many children have lost a testicle because too much time elapsed between when their injury occurred and when they were treated.

Q: When is it necessary for a child athlete to begin wearing an athletic supporter or cup?

A: If a child is involved in any kind of activity that could lead to groin injury, his testicles should be supported and protected. An athletic supporter binds the testicles, keeping them stationary and close to the body. To achieve this same result in younger children, have them wear tight briefs instead of boxer shorts. Protective plastic inserts, or cups, can also be used to help prevent blunt trauma injury, and should be worn whenever possible and available. It may be possible to special order a smaller size if necessary from your local sporting goods retailer.

For more information about testicular injury, visit <http://www.urologyhealth.org/pediatric/>.