

& Joint News

Bone

TRI RIVERS SURGICAL ASSOCIATES

FALL/WINTER 2004

Tumbling toward injury?

Gymnastics
second only
to football
in injury risk

Hours spent perfecting handsprings and backflips may have your young gymnast tumbling toward injury. Gymnastics offer athletes the benefits of staying physically active while teaching discipline and teamwork, but many parents do not realize that gymnasts are at high risk for injury. In fact, gymnastics rank second only to football in the number of athletes injured annually.

"Gymnasts are at risk for both traumatic injuries that occur suddenly and repetitive stress conditions that develop over time," said Trenton M. Gause, M.D., orthopedic surgeon with Tri Rivers Surgical Associates.

According to Dr. Gause, the nature of the sport, which involves repetitive tumbles, backflips and dismounts, can lead to a number of bone and joint conditions.

"Gymnastics require the athlete to use the wrists, elbows and shoulders as weight-bearing joints. Because the upper extremities are not designed to bear weight, repeated stress on the joints — particularly the wrists — causes a high incidence of injuries," he said.

"In the wrist and other parts of the body, young gymnasts are susceptible to stress fractures, strains and sprains. Other common problems among gymnasts include lower back pain, as well as knee and ankle conditions caused by overuse," Dr. Gause said.

According to Dr. Gause, minor injuries — which often result in minimal loss of mobility or mild to moderate pain — can usually be treated at home with a few simple measures.

Apply ice to the injured area for a day or two to reduce swelling. Over-the-counter medications, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, can be used to alleviate pain. Remember that aspirin should not be given to a young person, and all medications should be administered in age- and weight-appropriate dosages.

"The injured gymnast should then be encouraged to rest for a day or two and gradually resume use of the affected joint, muscle or limb. In many cases, conservative therapies will be sufficient, and the young athlete will be able to return to his or her normal level of activity," he said.

More serious injuries, such as fractures, may require medical treatment to promote healing and prevent serious damage to the musculoskeletal system. Care from a medical professional is needed when:

- Pain and swelling do not improve within 24 to 48 hours.
- The gymnast experiences recurring pain or sustains frequent injuries to the same area.
- The injury causes swelling, instability, deformity or other obvious changes in the bone or joint.

Continued on page 3

What's All the Crowing About?



Joint fluid therapy may be worth a shot for your knee pain.

Seventeen years ago, a knee injury left Karen, then 27, unable to pick up her children's toys. As her children grew, the onset of osteoarthritis further limited Karen's mobility.

After years of treatment to alleviate pain, Karen, now 44, looks forward to dancing the chicken at her son's wedding thanks to joint fluid therapy — a newer treatment derived, ironically, from rooster combs.

"Joint fluid therapy involves injecting a substance similar to your own joint fluid into the affected knee. The fluid can help reduce inflammation

and pain in the joint," said William D. Abraham, M.D., orthopedic surgeon with Tri Rivers Surgical.

Joint fluid therapy may benefit patients with mild to moderate osteoarthritis who have not responded to traditional therapies, including physical therapy, exercise, over-the-counter pain relievers, prescription medications and steroid injections.

"It does not cure osteoarthritis, stop the progression of the disease or heal worn cartilage, but it may temporarily improve pain and stiffness in many patients," Dr. Abraham said.

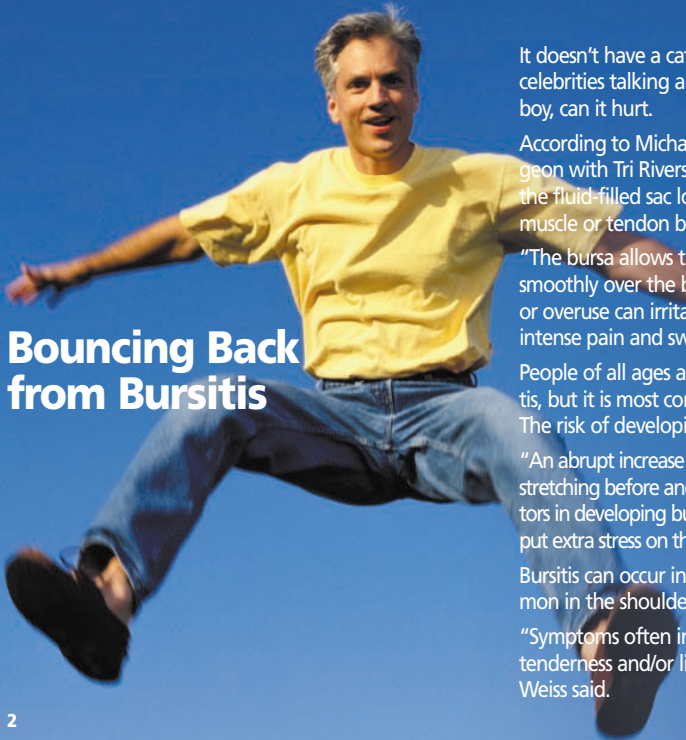
Patients usually notice some pain relief within the first week or two after their initial injection. The

effects typically peak five to nine weeks after treatment and may last for six to 12 months.

While undergoing treatment, patients receive a series of injections over the course of several weeks.

"Within a few days of the first treatment, I felt some improvement," Karen said. "Following the subsequent injections, 90 percent of my pain was alleviated. I can walk easier and sleep better."

By reducing symptoms of arthritis, joint fluid therapy may help delay the need for knee replacement in some patients. Treatment can be repeated every year or two for as long as the patient continues to benefit, Dr. Abraham said.



Bouncing Back from Bursitis

It doesn't have a catchy name and you don't hear celebrities talking about it on Oprah. It's bursitis. And, boy, can it hurt.

According to Michael W. Weiss, M.D., orthopedic surgeon with Tri Rivers, bursitis occurs when the bursa, the fluid-filled sac located between a bone and a muscle or tendon becomes inflamed.

"The bursa allows the muscle or tendon to move smoothly over the bone," he said. "Repetitive stress or overuse can irritate the bursa sac, leading to intense pain and swelling."

People of all ages and fitness levels can develop bursitis, but it is most common in the weekend warrior. The risk of developing bursitis also increases with age.

"An abrupt increase in physical activity and inadequate stretching before and after exercise are significant factors in developing bursitis," said Dr. Weiss. "These actions put extra stress on the body, including the bursa."

Bursitis can occur in almost any joint, but is most common in the shoulder, elbow, hip and knee.

"Symptoms often include pain, swelling, stiffness, tenderness and/or limited range of motion," Dr. Weiss said.

With proper care, bursitis can often improve on its own in a couple of weeks. But even with treatment, some people experience chronic bursitis.

How can you help your bursa sac feel good again? Dr. Weiss recommends the following:

- Rest and apply ice to the affected area for the first 24 to 72 hours after symptoms appear.
- Anti-inflammatory medications may relieve pain and inflammation. If necessary, a cortisone injection around the affected area can provide long-lasting relief.
- Avoid putting excessive pressure on the swollen area.
- If the condition worsens or does not improve in a week or two, seek medical attention.

"Surgery to remove the bursa is considered only when symptoms become troublesome and persistent," Dr. Weiss said.

Maintaining a healthy body weight and staying active are also helpful.

"Regular physical activity accompanied by proper stretching will keep the body conditioned and help prevent bursitis," Dr. Weiss said.



Tired of Horsing Around with Knee Pain?

Elmer Colteryahn was. Degenerative arthritis had caused extensive damage to the cartilage in his knees. The pain and loss of mobility meant curtailing favorite activities.

"My knees kept getting worse year after year," said Mr. Colteryahn, 73.

Thomas S. Muzzonigro, M.D., his physician at Tri Rivers, suggested minimally invasive total knee replacement — a newer procedure in which the arthritic joint is replaced through a smaller incision.

"Instead of the nine- to 10-inch opening required for traditional total knee replacement, minimally invasive knee replacement allows surgeons to remove and replace a damaged knee through a four- to five-inch opening," he said.

According to Dr. Muzzonigro, minimally invasive techniques are also being used by doctors at Tri Rivers to perform partial knee replacement for

patients whose arthritis is confined to the inner part of the knee, called the medial compartment.

"For both total and partial knee replacement patients, the smaller incision may mean less postoperative pain, a shorter hospital stay, an accelerated rehabilitation and a quicker return to activities," he said.

Mr. Colteryahn underwent minimally invasive knee replacement in April.

His arthritis pain was eliminated immediately.

At his six-week check-up, even the postoperative pain was nearly gone. Mr. Colteryahn was walking better than he had in years and found that he could help out more on the family farm. By June, Mr. Colteryahn was logging 18-hour days as chairman of the Butler Rodeo.

"My new knee kept me going," he said.



CATCH THE WAVE

Surf www.tririversortho.com, Tri Rivers' new web site. There you'll learn more about our orthopedic specialists. You can also:

- Browse our Joint Pain, Sports Medicine and Osteoporosis centers.
- Read about shoulder pain, ACL tears and other orthopedic topics.
- Get directions to our offices in the North Hills and Butler.
- Request an appointment online.
- Register for our community education programs.
- Order free health information and personal medication cards.

Whether you have gnarly knees, a radical rotator cuff or aches and pains from a wipe out, the physicians at Tri Rivers can help. Visit www.tririversortho.com, your online resource for bone and joint care.



Tumbling toward injury?

Continued from page 1

The good news is that by taking a few preventive measures, many minor injuries can be avoided and serious injuries can be minimized.

"Young gymnasts should be encouraged to begin each practice session by performing the appropriate stretching regimen to loosen muscles. For athletes who have had a prior injury, special braces are available to stabilize and support the ankle, knee, elbow and wrist. After an injury, a special exercise program and physical therapy should be utilized to strengthen the affected joint," Dr. Gause said.

In addition, parents should assess the quality of the gymnastics program and rely on the judgment of the trainer. Qualified instructors know how to teach techniques appropriate for the child's age and skill level and offer appropriate spotting.

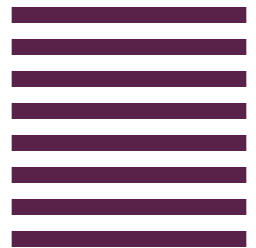


NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 18188 PITTSBURGH, PA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

TRI RIVERS SURGICAL ASSOCIATES INC
PASSAVANT PROFESSIONAL BUILDING
9104 BABCOCK BLVD SUITE 2120
PITTSBURGH PA 15237



Bone & Joint News

Tri Rivers Surgical Associates, Inc.
 Passavant Professional Building
 9104 Babcock Boulevard, Suite 2120
 Pittsburgh, PA 15237

PRE-SORTED
 FIRST CLASS MAIL
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 PITTSBURGH, PA
 PERMIT NO. 4725

In this issue...

- Preventing Gymnastics Injuries
- What's All the Crowing About?
- Tired of Horsing Around with Knee Pain?
- Bouncing Back from Bursitis

To learn more about joint pain, sports injuries and other orthopedic concerns, complete and return the following information.

Please send me a free subscription to *Bone and Joint News*

Name _____

Address _____

Please send me information on:

City _____

Sports injuries in young athletes

State _____

Arthritis/total joint replacement

Zip _____

Minimally invasive knee replacement

Joint fluid therapy

Your name and address will not be shared with any other organization.

SP04/PS



TRI RIVERS
 Surgical Associates, Inc.

Bone and Joint Medicine and Surgery

Orthopedic Surgery

W. Scott Nettrour, M.D. • Lewis F. Nettrour, M.D.
 Michael W. Weiss, M.D. • D. Kelly Agnew, M.D.
 William D. Abraham, M.D. • Trenton M. Gause, M.D.
 Thomas S. Muzzonigro, M.D. • FX. Plunkett, M.D.

Locations

North Hills • Butler

Contact us

Toll free at 1-866-874-7483

www.tririversortho.com info@tririversortho.com

©2003 Tri Rivers Surgical Associates, Inc.