

[IMAGE]

## Early Joint Trauma May Lead to Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of joint disease, and numerous factors can contribute to its development, including general “wear and tear” and family history of the condition. Osteoarthritis is fairly common in the elderly population, although it can also strike younger people. Evidence now suggests that joint trauma in childhood or young adulthood may contribute to osteoarthritis in later life.

A recent study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* recorded prior and current injury status in 1,321 young medical students (average age: 22 years). Injury was defined as trauma to the knee or hip joint. Subsequent trauma and specific sites of arthritis were reported during a 36-year follow-up period.

Nearly 14% of participants who reported a knee injury in youth or young adulthood developed osteoarthritis of the knee by age 65, compared with only six percent of those without any such prior injury. Overall, prior joint injury significantly correlated with risk for later-life osteoarthritis at the specific injury site. The authors urge the use of proper sports equipment under safe conditions to help prevent joint injuries in youth.

For more information on ways to keep your children as healthy and pain-free as possible, contact your doctor. You can also find additional exercise and fitness information on line at <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/sports.html>.

### *Reference:*

Gelber AC, Hochberg MC, Mead LA, et al. Joint injury in young adults and risk for subsequent knee and hip osteoarthritis. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2000; Vol. 133, pp321-28.

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