

Our team

Cynthia LaBella, MD, Pediatric Sports Medicine

Physician — Dr. LaBella is the medical director of Children's Memorial's Institute for Sports Medicine and an assistant professor of pediatrics at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. She reviews the progress of each KIPP participant and makes individualized recommendations for reducing injury risk and improving athletic performance.

Michael Huxford, MEd, ATC, CSCS, YCS, Certified Athletic Trainer — As the sports medicine coordinator and head athletic trainer for the Institute for Sports Medicine, Mike has expertise in the area of athletic training for children and adolescents. He leads KIPP sessions and trains all instructors. He also works with Dr. LaBella to review each KIPP participant's progress.

Children's Memorial Physical Therapists

Several physical therapists at Children's Memorial have been trained in KIPP techniques and help lead sessions throughout the year.

What are people saying about KIPP?

"[KIPP] gave us the tools to identify correct and incorrect mechanics that are often the culprit of significant injuries. Our girls had a great time with the program. Last year we had only one knee injury, and that was a player who did not go through KIPP."

Dave Underwood, Head Coach, Girls' Varsity Soccer, Wheaton Academy High School

"[KIPP] taught me to land on both feet and how to not make my knees cave in when I land which will protect my knees from injuries. I think that it is a good program and I recommend it to serious athletes."

Aly Lansky, age 14, soccer player

"Participating in KIPP made my daughter more aware of the importance of proper techniques in various sports to prolong healthy knees. It was a very enlightening class."

Maureen Carini, parent

Contact us

For more information and to view a video highlighting KIPP, visit childrensmemorial.org/sports or call us at 773.327.1201.

Mailing address

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Children's Memorial Hospital seeks philanthropic support to strengthen its programs and services. For more information on funding opportunities that help children and families, please contact the Children's Memorial Foundation at 773.880.4237 or foundation@childrensmemorial.org



The Institute for Sports Medicine is comprised of a team of specialists with expertise in the treatment and prevention of the sport-related injuries and medical conditions unique to children and adolescents.

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Children's Memorial Knee Injury Prevention Program

*KIPP: A program to reduce
sports-related knee injuries
in teenage girls*



Facts about knee injuries

Each year in the United States over 20,000 high school girls suffer a serious sports-related knee injury. In fact, girls are up to six times more likely to injure their anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) than boys in similar sports. Over 70% of ACL injuries occur without any contact with another player, typically while landing from a jump or changing direction suddenly. An ACL injury at an early age is a life-changing event. Such injuries often require surgery and/or many months of rehabilitation. Sadly, regardless of treatment, ACL injuries are associated with a 10-fold increased risk for degenerative knee arthritis. To address this, Children's Memorial's Institute for Sports Medicine has developed a Knee Injury Prevention Program (KIPP) which is designed to lower the risk of ACL injuries in female athletes.

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Questions about knee injuries

Why are girls more susceptible to knee injuries?

Researchers are continuing to investigate the reasons for this gender disparity in ACL injury rates. To date, the most convincing evidence comes from studies that have identified gender differences in the balance and timing of muscle activation around the knee. When performing certain athletic tasks, such as landing from a jump or changing direction suddenly, girls tend to demonstrate less activation of the hamstring muscles, less knee and hip flexion, and greater inward collapse of the knees than boys. These neuromuscular patterns have been associated with a greater risk for ACL injury.

What can girls do to prevent knee injuries?

Girls who participate in neuromuscular training programs like KIPP are up to 9 times less likely to injure their ACL.

What is KIPP?

KIPP is a neuromuscular exercise program designed to lower the risk of ACL injuries among adolescent female athletes. KIPP was developed by our sports medicine experts and is based on published scientific research. **Our own research has shown that these exercises can also reduce recurrent knee pain by 56%.** KIPP consists of two one-hour classes per week for six consecutive weeks and is taught by certified athletic trainers and licensed physical therapists trained in knee injury prevention techniques.

What happens in a KIPP class?

KIPP instructors lead participants through a series of progressively challenging strengthening exercises, plyometrics, and agility drills. Participants learn how to improve neuromuscular control of knee motion and



to recognize unsafe knee positions. Participants are videotaped during the program to provide them with visual feedback on their progress.

Who should participate in KIPP?

All physically active teenage girls can benefit from KIPP. The exercise program is specifically designed for girls 13 years of age and older. KIPP is not a treatment program for knee injuries. Girls must be fully recovered from any injuries before they can participate.

When and where is KIPP offered?

KIPP is offered up to four times per year at various locations in the Chicago area. Schedules and enrollment forms are available at childrensmemorial.org/sports or by calling 773.327.1201.

Research

Our KIPP team is committed to scientific research to further our understanding of the mechanisms and prevention of sports-related knee injuries. All KIPP participants are invited to contribute to the Institute for Sports Medicine's ongoing research by completing three short questionnaires. The information we gain from this research will be directly applied to future KIPP sessions.