

## BACK PAIN IN KIDS – FYSH

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is for this reason that any child identified with this problem should be carefully supervised in sports which involve excessive axial loading of the spinal column, such as weight lifting and football, during that critical phase of growth.

Studies of the incidence of progression with spondylolysis or spondylolisthesis in young athletes indicate that there is no justification for recommending restriction of sporting activities, when the degree of slip is Myerding grade 1 or 2 (Muschik). Spondylolisthesis of Myerding grade 3 and above should be referred for evaluation for possible surgery, since the incidence of anterior slippage is highest in this group. Once the adolescent growth phase is completed, further slippage of a spondylolisthesis, with less than a Myerding grade 2 classification, is unlikely.

### Disc Herniation

Lumbar disc herniation is a more common condition in children than may at first be suspected.

Smith performed MRI scans of 154 children 10 years of age. Nine percent of the children studied already showed signs of an abnormality in at least one disc in their spine. None of the children had ever had any problems with their back and none were reporting any back pain or other symptoms of disc degeneration (Smith). Kjaer performed MRI scans of 439 children 13 years of age. Signs of disc degeneration were noted in approximately 1/3 of the subjects. Disc protrusions, endplate changes, and anterolisthesis in the lumbar spine were strongly associated with LBP.

The greatest disc bulges occur when the spine is subjected to simultaneous forces of compression and lateral bending (Reuber). Anterior compression of the lumbar discs is common with flexion and loading of the lower spine. Constant lateral bending can be simulated by the lateral tilt produced in the pelvis by lumbo-pelvic joint subluxation with the associated muscle contractures. Could a long-term tilted pelvis be a primary cause of lumbar disc degeneration? That will have to be the subject of another paper.

### Take Home Message

- Accurately identify the cause of pediatric back pain
- Recognize and rule out pathologies as a cause of childhood back pain
- Provide the appropriate care specifically to match the condition

Remember that children are the present and the future of chiropractic..... Care for them well.

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