



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Sports Medicine: Sacroiliitis

Sacroiliitis is the swelling (inflammation) of either one or both of the sacroiliac (SI) joints. The SI joint is where the lower spine and pelvis connect. Sacroiliitis can be hard to diagnose because it is often mistaken for other causes of low back pain. The pain can be in the low back, buttocks or extend down the leg. It has been linked to a group of diseases that cause inflammatory arthritis of the spine.

Signs and symptoms

- pain in the low back or buttock, hip, groin or leg
- stiffness felt in the hips and low back, especially after getting out of bed or sitting a long time
- pain that gets worse with sitting or standing for long periods or rolling over in bed

Increased risk

- activity that places repeated stress on the joint (contact sports, heavy lifting)
- personal or family history of arthritis or other autoimmune disease
- activity that requires bearing weight on one leg more the other (stair climbing, walking with big strides, running)

Treatment

- Medicine can help with inflammation and pain.
 - Anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®) may be recommended. Take these as directed by your health care provider.
 - Other minor pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®).

- Cold and heat may be used.
 - Cold should be applied for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours for swelling and after any activity that makes symptoms worse. Use ice packs or an ice massage.
 - Heat may be used before performing stretching and strengthening activities prescribed by your health care provider or athletic trainer. Use a heat pack or warm soak. Apply for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Therapy like stretching, strengthening and low impact aerobic conditioning are often recommended. Change of sleep position (like laying on a side with a pillow between the knees) may help with pain while sleeping and at waking.
- A referral to a rheumatologist may be needed if symptoms are related to arthritis.
- A steroid injection may be helpful to decrease pain and inflammation in the joint.
- In severe cases surgery may be needed to fuse the joint if other therapy does not help.

How to prevent

- Do correct warm-up and stretching before practice or competition.
- Maintain good core strength and posture while sitting and during exercise.
- Maintain proper conditioning, core and hip strength, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness.

When to call the health care provider

Call your health care provider or the **Sports Medicine team** at **(614) 355-6000** if:

- symptoms get worse after 2 to 4 weeks, even with treatment
- new, unexplained symptoms develop

To schedule an appointment with Sports Medicine, visit [NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicineScheduling](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/sportsmedicine/scheduling) or scan this code with your camera phone.

