



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

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Sports Medicine: Spinous Process Apophysitis (Kissing Spine)

Spinous process apophysitis (kissing spine) is an injury to an apophysis in the low back. An apophysis is a growth plate at the end of a bone where a muscle, ligament or tendon is attached. The spinous process is the back part of your spine that you can feel under the skin.

Signs and symptoms

- back pain in the middle of the low back
- pain that is worse with arching backwards
- tenderness at the spinous process point

Increased risk

- having an increased lordotic curve (sway back) in lumbar spine
- poor physical conditioning, especially with differences in strength, flexibility and neuromuscular control
- starting dance or gymnastics at a young age
- sports that require hyperextension of the back over and over (gymnastics, dance)

Treatment

- Medicine
 - 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®)
- Use of cold and heat

- 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.
- Rest from painful activity for a few weeks can reduce pain and allow the injury to heal
- Elastic lumbar corset
 - A soft brace called a lumbar corset may be used along with rest to relieve pain.
- Exercises
 - Exercises to improve strength and flexibility may be recommended when the pain starts to go away to help learn proper back mechanics. These can be done at home but often a referral to a physical therapist or athletic trainer may be recommended by your health care provider.

How to prevent

- Use proper technique.
- Do correct warm-up and stretching before practice or competition.
- Maintain correct conditioning, back and hamstring flexibility, back strength and endurance 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
- you have numbness, weakness or loss of bowel or bladder function
- new, unexplained symptoms develop

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

