

Whether tackle or touch, Thanksgiving family football can lead to injuries

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(Medical Xpress) -- Whether it's tackle or touch, the traditional pickup family football game is almost as important as the Thanksgiving dinner itself to many families.

"Getting outside and being active is a great way to burn off extra calories from eating too much pumpkin pie, but it also can lead to injuries," said Dr. Pietro Tonino, director of Loyola University Health System's Sports Medicine Program.

Although there is nothing like a little family competition, Tonino says it's best to leave the heavy hitting to the professionals.

"Be sure to warm up those muscles before hitting the football field and take it easy. Remember, this isn't the Super Bowl."

Soft-tissue injuries are some of the most common. Tonino shares symptoms to look out for and how to treat minor injuries that can happen on the family backyard field:

Sprain

Our joints are supported by ligaments. These bands of connective tissue connect one bone to another. A sprain happens when a ligament has been stretched or torn. Your ankles, knees and wrists are the most vulnerable to sprains.

Most sprains heal using the RICE method: rest, ice, compression and elevation. If the sprain needs additional medical attention, contact your doctor.

Contusions

A contusion is a bruise caused by a blow to a muscle, tendon or ligament, which occurs when blood pools around an injury.

Contusions also can be treated with the RICE method. If symptoms persist, contact your doctor to prevent permanent damage to the soft tissues.

Stress Fractures

When a bone is stressed by overuse, tiny breaks in the bone can occur. Symptoms include pain and swelling in the region of the fracture. The bones of the lower leg and foot are prone to stress fractures.

If you believe you have a stress fracture, contact your doctor. These injuries are treated by rest, activity modification, cast immobilization and, rarely, surgery.

“The most important thing to remember to avoid injury this [Thanksgiving](#) is make sure you take off those muddy shoes before entering the house. There is no coming back from a mom-is-so-mad-her-house-is-muddy [injury](#),” Tonino said jokingly.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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