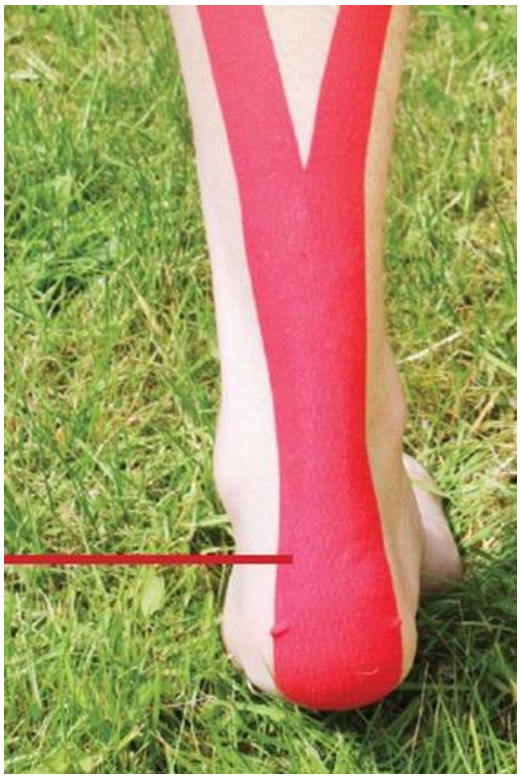
Sports Medicine

Not Just for Athletes

Historically, Sports Medicine has been synonymous with sideline orthopedic surgeons rushing to the aid of a football player, tennis star or golf great. But in recent years, Sports Medicine has become a growing multi-disciplinary field attracting physicians from Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine and Internal Medicine. Even pediatricians have migrated to specializing in Sports Medicine.



Therapeutic tape may be used to treat a variety of orthopedic, neuromuscular, neurological and other medical conditions common to sports injuries. The tape facilitates the body's natural healing process while providing support and stability to muscles and joints without restricting the body's range of motion.

The patients have changed too. "In my 16 years of practice in Sports Medicine, I've treated numerous professional athletes from various national and international golf and tennis tournaments," says Stephen Steele, DO, FAOASM, a Family Medicine physician who specializes in Sports Medicine. "I've also seen my practice evolve to include individuals who get their exercise by simply walking the dog or climbing the stairs in their house."

The benefit of a Sports Medicine physician, for athletes and non-athletes alike, is that they have been trained to focus on the precise diagnosis and treatment of a patient's injury and can make the necessary referrals to safely return them to the activities they enjoy. Dr. Steele notes, "Injury management is precision. Find the exact, right diagnosis…then you can treat it much more efficiently."

Like orthopedic surgeons trained in Sports Medicine, Primary Care physicians specializing in Sports Medicine are well-trained in musculoskeletal medicine and can diagnose musculoskeletal sports conditions. However, they specialize in the non-surgical treatment of musculoskeletal sports conditions while Sports Medicine orthopedic surgeons have additional training for the surgical treatment of these conditions.

According to the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, 90 percent of all sports injuries are non-surgical; therefore, most sports injuries can be treated by a Sports Medicine physician. Injuries requiring surgery are referred to an orthopedic surgeon. Dr. Steele adds, "Sports Medicine physicians work collaboratively with orthopedic surgeons, physical therapists, occupational therapists, sports psychologists (if necessary) and other health care professionals to develop a comprehensive rehabilitation plan so the patient can get back to doing what they love to do."

In addition to Eisenhower Medical Center's Sports Medicine physicians, the Eisenhower Wellness Institute at the Eisenhower George and Julia Argyros Health Center offers in-depth Sports Medicine consultations. Please call 760-610-7360 for more information.

First time with a Sports Medicine physician?

Dr. Steele recommends that patients share their exercise history with their physician. Be prepared to answer questions like these:

- What type(s) of exercise have you done and for how long?
- Did you stop exercising or stop playing a particular sport? Why?
- Have you changed your routine or equipment? For instance, if you're a runner, did you change your shoes recently?

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