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## **LITTLE LEAGUE PITCHING RULES**

### **Prevention**

Proper warm-ups including adequate stretching, running, and easy, gradual throwing should be done at each practice and game. Avoid overuse. Remember how much more time may be spent playing and practicing at home and on other teams in addition to the time they spent at practice. Guidelines have been developed by sports medicine experts to suggest the maximum number of pitches that should be allowed per game and the maximum number of games per week. Additional factors that can lead to overuse injuries are: Poor throwing mechanics, fatigue and failure to utilize lower body and core strength while throwing (ie. Lower extremity and core weakness).

### **Maximum Pitches Recommended**

| <b>Age</b>   | <b>Maximum Pitches/Game</b> | <b>Maximum Games/Week</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>8-10</b>  | 52 ± 15                     | 2 ± 0.6                   |
| <b>11-12</b> | 68 ± 18                     | 2 ± 0.5                   |
| <b>13-14</b> | 76 ± 16                     | 2 ± 0.4                   |
| <b>15-16</b> | 91 ± 16                     | 2 ± 0.4                   |
| <b>17-18</b> | 106 ± 16                    | 2 ± 0.6                   |

### **Age Recommended for Learning Various Pitches**

**Fastball:** 8 ± 2  
**Change-up:** 10 ± 3  
**Curve ball:** 14 ± 2  
**Screwball:** 17 ± 2

**Slider:** 16 ± 2  
**Forkball:** 16 ± 2  
**Knuckleball:** 15 ± 3

## Return-to-Throwing Program

| <u>Step</u>          | <u>Progression Criteria</u>   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>1. Short Toss</b> | Toss the ball 10 –15 feet for accuracy, using good throwing mechanics; no pain.   |
| <b>2. Long Toss</b>  | Stand 20 feet apart. Toss the ball back and forth 10 times. Increase distance until throwing 60–90 feet in the air (depending on age). Use good mechanics and throw for accuracy.   |
| <b>3. Hard Toss</b>  | Stand 60 feet apart (distance between bases) and throw five times at 1/2 speed, five times at 3/4 speed, and five times at full speed.  |
| <b>4. Fielding</b>   | Work on fielding ground balls and throwing to various bases from gradually more awkward positions. Outfielders work on throws to second base from an increasing distance.   |
| <b>5. Mound Toss</b> | From the mound, throw at 1/2 speed toward <b>(pitchers)</b> the plate. Emphasize accuracy and mechanics. Throw straight pitches progressively faster, up to 3/4 speed. For more advanced players, throw curve balls progressively faster up to 3/4 speed. |
| <b>6. Speed</b>      | Increase speed on all pitches toward full speed while maintaining good mechanics and accuracy.  |

Players with minor injuries might be able to complete this return-to-throwing program in several days. Others with more severe injuries will require much more time. It is critical that return to throwing not create any further pain or altered throwing mechanics