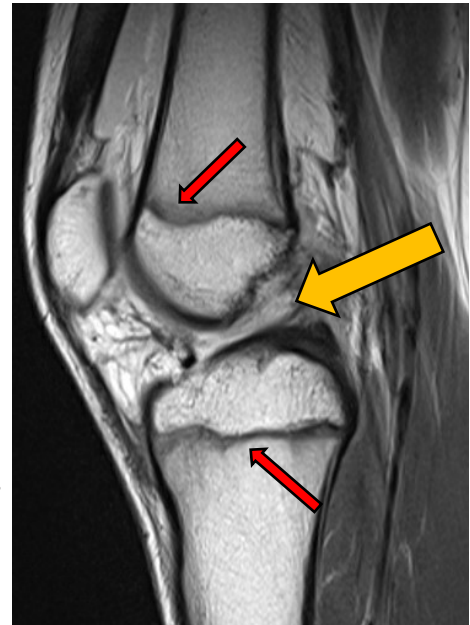


Novel surgery procedures by Dr. Steven Chudik let young athletes realize their dreams

It is not unusual for young children involved in sports to dream of becoming a professional athlete when they grow up. Despite the low odds of becoming a professional athlete, sports participation provides children many benefits such as staying active, being part of a team, learning to follow rules and being a good sport—win or lose—and most important, having fun.

One negative to playing sports is the potential for injuries. They happen at every age and in every sport. In his 20 years as an orthopaedic surgeon and sports medicine specialist, Dr. Steven Chudik with the Shoulder, Knee and Sports Medicine Injury Clinic, has treated thousands of injuries—minor and serious, common and uncommon—and each with its own unique need. As Dr. Chudik explains, every person is different which makes every injury different. In his quest to provide the best treatment for his patients Dr. Chudik has developed new instruments, surgical procedures, post-surgery rehabilitation and return-to-sport testing protocols. He has authored countless research papers and seven US patents.



MRI showing a torn ACL indicated by the gold arrow on a patient with open growth plates (red arrows).



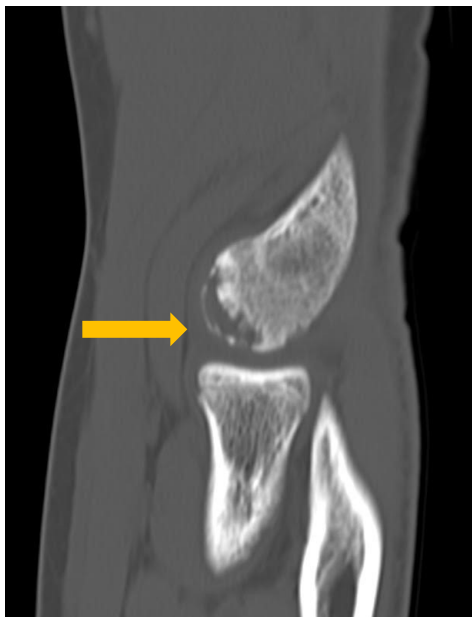
“Just because it’s a common injury, like an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear, doesn’t mean it should be treated just one way,” Dr. Chudik said. “Take an adolescent with an ACL tear and open growth plates, for example. Many used to tell the child his/her sports participation was over until the growth plates close because traditional surgical techniques for a torn ACL damages the growth plates and risk growth abnormalities,” he added.

Fortunately, Dr. Chudik developed a special surgical procedure that preserves the growth plates and reconstructs the ACL allowing numerous young children to resume normal activities, including sports. Many of his patients have gone on to become collegiate and professional athletes. View the video on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNGQ7AflEr0/ of the physeal-sparing surgery performed on a very active ten-year-old who earned a black belt in martial arts and played varsity baseball through the years after his ACL surgery.

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Special procedures

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CT-scan reveals an OCD of the capitellum of the elbow with bone loss and just a thin shell of bone remaining to support the cartilage joint surface.

Another example of Dr. Chudik not settling for the standard treatment involved a young baseball player who developed a condition known as osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) in his elbow. OCD most often occurs in knees but also is seen in the elbow and associated with throwing sports. It is a localized injury or condition causing the bone just below the cartilage surface of a joint to fail and fracture resulting in bone fragments and cartilage to break loose. The fragments can catch in the joint causing progressively worsening pain, locking, clicking and even leave a hole in the joint surface.

The young baseball player was unaware an OCD had been developing in his elbow until he was in high school when the pain became excruciating and even made a cracking noise preventing him from throwing.

Having previously had X-rays, a Computed Tomography (CT scan) was ordered and the family met with an orthopaedist from a highly regarded university-affiliated practice. Surprisingly, neither the orthopaedist nor his colleagues knew what to do for the problem because the OCD injury was so large. They offered surgery to “just clean up the injured bone and cartilage” that would result in a larger hole in the bone and possibly the end of playing baseball.

Quitting baseball was not an option at that point. As the parents shared the disappointing results of the orthopedist’s appointment, a friend recommended they contact Dr. Steven Chudik at Hinsdale Orthopaedics, a division of Illinois Bone and Joint Institute.

Upon review of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), CT scan and an examination of the elbow, Dr. Chudik explained the young thrower had an OCD which was not common, and understanding the patient’s goal, he suggested a new surgical procedure he developed to treat OCD in the knee that could be adapted to the elbow.

“This patient had a condition I normally see in young, active children. It most commonly occurs in the knees, but does occur in the elbows of young throwers or gymnasts who place a lot of

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Special procedures

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repetitive force across that joint” Dr. Chudik explained. “However, this OCD lesion was more advanced and the bone had resorbed leaving the overlying cartilage unsupported and at risk to fail. Surgery was needed to restore the supporting bone while preserving overlying cartilage,” he added.

Similar to his dissatisfaction with the standard treatment for ACL injuries in adolescents, Dr. Chudik found the need to develop a procedure to treat OCD lesions in his young patients. His pioneering OCD procedure involves carefully tunneling to the affected area to rebuild the bone behind the cartilage so it can support the cartilage and preserve the joint.

“Fortunately, I saw the patient when I did because during surgery, I discovered the cartilage joint surface was starting to break free,” Dr. Chudik detailed. “I completed the procedure as planned, carefully tunnelling to and bone grafting the injured bone without disturbing the cartilage surface,” he explained.

According to Dr. Chudik, his procedure requires the elbow to rest for an extended period of time so it heals completely before starting a slow and gradually progressive strengthening protocol. After restoration of normal strength, Dr. Chudik has the player complete a throwing program before returning to play.

Overuse that goes along with being a competitive athlete can result in potential career-ending injuries which can have a long-term negative impact on joints. It is important for athletes not to play through pain and seek early medical care. Fortunately for this young patient, he was able to return to baseball. He currently is trying to decide whether to accept a Division I scholarship to play college baseball, or directly enter the professional baseball draft.

To learn more about the many other special procedures Dr. Chudik’s developed, visit his website, [stevenchudikmd.com/](http://www.stevenchudikmd.com/). To make an appointment with Dr. Chudik, you can schedule online at <https://www.stevenchudikmd.com/schedule-online/>, or email [contactus@chudikmd.com/](mailto:contactus@chudikmd.com).

