

# Information on Pitching Recommendations for Youth Baseball Players

\*Information from USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee with help by the American Sports Medicine Institute, USA Baseball News, Journal of Biomechanics, and The American Journal of Sports Medicine (2006)

\*Information also from an article on WebMD.com titled "Baseball Pitching Compared in Children and Pros" (2000)

\*The following recommendations are not specifically from Ripken Baseball. We simply compiled the information and encourage each coach/parent to conduct further research and make the best decisions for their player. Always consult a physician if you have a concern.

One of the missions of the USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee is to provide scientifically based information to youth baseball members decreasing the chance of injury and maximizing their ability to play at a higher level.

- Pitchers should be taken out of the game immediately if their arm is fatigued.
- If a pitcher complains about arm pain and it does not go away after 4 days or the same pain happens immediately when they pitch again, the parent should take their son/daughter to a physician.
- Pitchers who competitively pitch more than 85 pitches per game, more than 8 months out of a year, or with arm fatigue are several times more likely to require elbow surgery.
- Injuries that occur when pitchers are adults may have begun to develop during their youth level of baseball.
- Once a pitcher leaves the game they should not come back in to pitch later in that game. The pitcher's tendons, muscles, and ligaments need time to "cool down" just as they needed time to "warm-up."
- The day after a start should be for rest, not participating in any drills that use an overhand movement.
- Throwing curveballs and sliders increase the chance of elbow and shoulder pain. If breaking balls are thrown, it is very important for the pitcher to have the proper mechanics.
- Developing the skills needed to play at a higher level is done through repetition, but a pitcher should not throw for more than one team per season. Performing drills to build strength and consistency is good, but the pitcher must find time to rest between starts. We encourage the player to only pitch for one team during the year.
- A pitcher should not compete in baseball for more than 9 months out of the year. The pitcher will need those 3 other months for "active rest." Other physical activities are encouraged, but no other overhand activities should be done in these 3 months. (Javelin Throw, Football Quarterback, Swimming)
- Players should be taught proper pitching mechanics from an early age, and their pitches will get faster over time as joint force increases.
- A great way to prevent injury to a pitcher is to improve overall fitness. Athletes as a whole injure themselves much more frequently when they are fatigued. (WebMD)
- To prevent injuries to a pitcher's arm, have them work on strength and flexibility of their shoulder, wrist, and elbow. (WebMD)
- Parents should get to know their child's coach to ensure that they are teaching their child the proper mechanics of pitching. It is the coach and parent's responsibility to make sure the player is using the proper equipment, taking enough time to warm-up, and also enough time with stretching exercises. (WebMD)

USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee				
Recommendations for Limits with Youth Pitchers				
Age Group	Pitches per Game	Pitches per Week	Pitches per Season	Pitches per Year
9-10	50	75	1000	2000
11-12	75	100	1000	3000
13-14	75	125	1000	3000
15-16	90	2 Games/Week	---	---
17-18	105	2 Games/Week	---	---

USA Baseball Medical & Safety Advisory Committee				
Recommendations for Days of Rest After a Start				
Age Group	1 Day Rest	2 Days Rest	3 Days Rest	4 Days Rest
9-10	21-33 Pitches	34-42 Pitches	43-50 Pitches	50+ Pitches
11-12	27-34 Pitches	35-54 Pitches	55-57 Pitches	58+ Pitches
13-14	30-35 Pitches	36-55 Pitches	56-69 Pitches	70+ Pitches
15-16	30-39 Pitches	40-59 Pitches	60-79 Pitches	80+ Pitches
17-18	30-39 Pitches	40-59 Pitches	60-89 Pitches	90+ Pitches