There’s nothing quite like the excitement of watching your kid score a goal, a basket or a home run. But with more kids participating in sports than ever before, there’s growing concern about youth sports injuries.

**The dangers of concussions**
Naturally, concussions are at the top of the list of parents’ concerns. The brains of children are rapidly growing, and it’s a critical time for brain development. Research indicates that children who experience repeated blows to the head – even when they don’t result in concussions – are more likely to experience memory and brain functioning problems at an early age.

**Which youth sports have the highest concussion risk?**
Collision sports like tackle football, rugby, lacrosse, hockey and full-contact martial arts make head injuries more likely since every practice and game requires aggressive contact. Soccer, with player collisions and moves like heading the ball, also can contribute to the sport’s higher concussion rate.

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Protecting your child athlete from concussions
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How can I reduce my child’s risk of head injury?
Nearly six percent of kids ages 6 to 11 experience a significant head injury, and up to 15 percent of adolescents report having had a concussion. However, your child can still enjoy the thrill of the game while staying safe. Consider these options for decreasing the chance of head trauma in youth sports:

• Choose non-contact sports like tennis, volleyball or swimming.
• Participate in a youth sports league that has concussion safety policies.
• Look for a tackle football league that uses the “heads up” tackling technique that trains kids to use their shoulders or legs, not heads, to take the hit instead.
• Evaluate the coach’s philosophy. Make sure he or she focuses on teaching good teamwork and sportsmanship instead of aggressive playing.

Teach your child to recognize concussion symptoms. Tell him or her to report any blows to the head or concussion symptoms to a coach, referee or you.

Symptoms may be immediate, or they may appear hours or days later after a head injury. Discuss these with your child:

• Headache
• Nausea or vomiting
• Dizziness or balance problems
• Double or blurry vision
• Sensitivity to light or noise
• Feeling dazed, stunned or mentally “foggy”
• Trouble concentrating or remembering

If you suspect a concussion, your child should see a doctor before playing sports again. Both the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommend that children sit out during a game if there’s any chance of a concussion. Talk to your child’s primary care physician or a sports medicine specialist trained in concussion management about appropriate next steps.

To download a free concussion guide, visit FranciscanHealth.org/ConcussionInjury.

Add Omega-3-rich seafood to your regular diet

While the phrase “fatty fish” doesn’t sound particularly appetizing or healthy, nothing could be further from the truth. Several fish varieties are great sources for Omega-3 fatty acids.

Granted, there are several plant-based sources for one type of Omega-3, including walnuts and canola oil. But this type, referred to as ALA, is not as easily accessed nutritionally by our bodies, according to Kathleen Cowden, a registered dietitian at Franciscan Health. The Omega-3 in fish (the EPA and DHA types) is more ideal for human diets. Great sources include salmon, tuna, trout, mackerel, sardines and some white fish like tilapia, cod and flounder.

“As long as you don’t have a seafood allergy, fish sources of Omega-3 have a greater impact in reducing inflammation, heart disease as well as improving brain development in newborns,” said Cowden. Ongoing research also suggests Omega-3 fatty acids can help control Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, eye disease, and even depression, she added.

Simple choices
Wild-caught and farm-raised fish is available in most grocery stores these days, even packaged in individual servings or already grilled or poached.

“Your most economical choice is to take portions home to cook, and it’s really much easier — and less smelly — to prepare than most people think,” said Cowden.

For instance, cut a salmon fillet into servings about an inch wide, brush with olive oil, and season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. French or brown mustard also is a great way to add flavor to salmon while it cooks. Broil for 8 to 10 minutes. Slow-roasting in a 275-degree oven for about 20 to 25 minutes also takes a lot of guesswork and mess out of preparing fish.

“Another great source of Omega-3 people overlook is canned sardines on the grocery shelf,” said Cowden. “If you like canned tuna, you probably will enjoy sardines.”

Sardines can be easily added to scrambled eggs or pasta sauce, for instance. Look for the cans labeled “skinless and boneless,” she suggests, adding that the skin and bones are edible and the bones are a good source of calcium.

For salmon and sardine recipe cards, visit FranciscanHealth.org/GHT and fill out the online form.
New technology speeds emergency care, bolsters communications in Indianapolis

When ambulance crews work emergencies, every moment is critical as they treat patients and relay information to emergency room physicians in advance of their arrival to the hospital.

Franciscan Health Indianapolis and local EMS agencies have taken steps to streamline that process with the Emergency Department’s recent deployment of Twiage. The smartphone application enables EMTs and paramedics to send crucial information about a patient’s status and symptoms in near-real time to the hospital.

“The prehospital patient care environment can be stressful and noisy, which makes it a challenge to relay accurate information to the hospital before the patient arrives; the hospital needs to know we are coming, but we also have a patient who needs our attention,” said paramedic Jon Kavanagh, EMS liaison for Franciscan Health Indianapolis. “Twiage propels emergency communications into the 21st century.”

Franciscan Health Indianapolis and Lutheran Health Network in Fort Wayne are the only two hospital systems in Indiana currently using Twiage. For ordinary use, the app, which operates on smartphones and tablets, takes about 10 minutes to learn.

“The biggest benefit of having Twiage is transmission of STEMI (the most deadly type of heart attack) EKGs from ambulances that cannot currently transmit monitor readings,” said Dr. Randall Todd, medical director of emergency health services at Franciscan Health in Indianapolis and Mooresville. “We can confirm what the medics are seeing and activate the cath lab before the patient arrives at our doors.”

The app is designed to protect patients’ personal health information (PHI) as well; once a patient reaches the hospital, PHI is automatically deleted from the responder’s secure HIPAA-compliant app and is irretrievable.

For more details about Twiage, visit FranciscanHealth.org/News.

Try us! If you’re 55 or older and have never been a Senior Promise member, you can join free for one year ($10 value) when you tell us you read about Senior Promise in Good Health Today. Find us online at FranciscanHealth.org/seniorpromiseindy, or call our Indianapolis office at (317) 528-8277 or Mooresville office at (317) 834-9548.

Become a Senior Promise Member
College student’s stroke signaled a common yet hidden heart condition

On the eve of her 21st birthday last February, probably the furthest thing from Kaitlin Holton’s mind was someone her age ever having a stroke.

She was getting ready for a dinner date with her new boyfriend and noticed that her entire left arm felt numb. The sensation was of a “stranger touching my face – maybe a pinched nerve.” The odd symptoms melted away for a time until she got into her car and gazed into the rearview mirror.

“The left side of my mouth drooped and wouldn’t move,” said Kaitlin, a senior at the University of Indianapolis. “My boyfriend said some of my speech was slurred, but I was still in denial. But after thinking about it, I thought, maybe I just had a stroke.” Several of her symptoms had mirrored those of family members who had gone through that ordeal.

The next day, Kaitlin told her mother, Kimberly Holton, what she had experienced the evening before. The former Franciscan Health nurse stared at her daughter intently and said, “We have to go to the ER. Now.”

After arriving at the Franciscan Health Indianapolis’ emergency department, a team of doctors, nurses and other clinicians immediately went into action. MRI and CT tests revealed two tiny spots on the front of the young patient’s brain. The on-call neurologist, Sara Schrader, MD, confirmed Kaitlin’s suspicions.

The birth of a stroke

During fetal development, the hole between the heart chambers functions to provide oxygen from the mother to the baby. This hole usually closes immediately with a flap after birth. However, in certain people this hole can persist.

This patent foramen ovale (PFO) — a veritable “hole in the heart” — can be as small as one centimeter in diameter. And while a PFO doesn’t cause strokes, it may impede the heart’s blood flow in a way that forms blood clots that end up in the brain.

A multidisciplinary team of experts at Franciscan Health Heart Center Indianapolis, neurologists and other clinicians mapped out a plan of action for Kaitlin. A so-called “bubble test,” a noninvasive approach, allowed doctors to assess blood flow through the heart and found the PFO in Kaitlin’s heart.

“It is not that uncommon of a condition and can affect up to 25 percent of the overall population,” said Abdelkader Almanfi, MD, an interventional cardiologist and member of Franciscan Physician Network Indiana Heart Physicians (IHP). “Luckily, the majority of patients don’t need treatment. Only those at higher risk of stroke or who’ve had a stroke with no explanation might deserve an evaluation by a cardiologist and neurologist for potential therapy with a closure device.”

Fixing the flap

Kaitlin’s care team recommended a noninvasive procedure using a transcatheter approach that would close the flap in her heart permanently. The procedure, performed by an interventional cardiologist, typically is performed under conscious sedation. A catheter is inserted into a groin vein and is carefully threaded through to the PFO. The catheter delivers a small mesh device at the PFO and the catheter is removed. Within six months, heart tissue regenerates and gradually takes the place of the mesh stent.

Healing process

Because of the stroke, Kaitlin remained at the hospital for six days so that Dr. Almanfi, neurologists and nursing staff could closely monitor her progress.

Looking back, Kaitlin says the entire experience was emotionally draining, but she considers herself fortunate. She didn’t require physical therapy and had no permanent facial droop or other difficult effects as is common with some stroke patients.

“Dr. Almanfi and all of the doctors, nurses and staff were fantastic,” she said. “I felt loved and taken care of. They genuinely cared about me.”

And Kaitlin Holton has another takeaway from her experience. It’s possible for a 21-year-old to have a stroke.
Check our website at FranciscanHealth.org/Events for more information. Support groups are free. Other classes have nominal charges or may be covered by insurance.

SENIOR PROMISE

For more than 30 years, Senior Promise has offered services and classes of interest to men and women age 50 and older. To learn more about current offerings, visit FranciscanHealth.org/SeniorPromiseIndy.

MATERNITY

PREGNANCY AND BIRTHING CLASSES
Most classes are held Monday through Friday at Franciscan Health Indianapolis. Class details can be found at FranciscanHealth.org/GuidingYou. Call (317) 528-8473 for more information and to register.

- Pregnancy 101
- Breastfeeding Basics
- Grand Parenting Basics
- Advanced Labor Support
- Multiple Blessings
- Newborn Care Basics
- Healthy Childbirth: classes are designed for your needs and personal schedule. Variations of the class include Healthy Childbirth Express and Healthy Childbirth Weekender.

MATERNITY TOURS
Join us for a group tour of our Center for Women & Children. Call (317) 528-5224 or send an email to GuidingYou@FranciscanAlliance.org for more details.

SMOKING CESSATION

Quitting tobacco is tough, but it is the most important change you will ever make. Our Aspire program can help by providing education and support to increase your chances of quitting.

Class sessions are held at Franciscan Health’s Indianapolis and Mooresville hospitals. The program cost is $50 and consists of four educational sessions and one-on-one counseling.

To enroll in one of our upcoming sessions, call (317) 528-QUIT (7848) or send an email to aspire@franciscanalliance.org.

CANCER SUPPORT CLASSES

For class details, visit FranciscanHealth.org/AdvancedCancerIndy and click on “Screenings and classes.”

- Crafter’s Corner
- Gentle Yoga (for patients and support persons)
- Look Good... Feel Better (Indianapolis and Mooresville)
- Moving Beyond (Tuesday or Thursday classes)

STOP THE BLEED TRAINING CLASS

You could save a life by knowing how to contain the bleeding of an injured person before first responders arrive.

Tuesday, Dec. 4
Franciscan Health Education Center,
421 N. Emerson Ave., Greenwood
Class is free. Register online at FranciscanHealth.org/Events. This class also can be offered to corporations or organizations interested in hosting a class. Send an email to Christine.Claborn@FranciscanAlliance.org if interested in corporate classes or class dates in 2019.

GRIEF SUPPORT

ADULT/adolescent bereavement
A full range of both adult and adolescent bereavement groups. Locations vary. Call (317) 528-2636.

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS
Held the second Tuesday of the month. Call (317) 528-5199 for information and room location.

WEIGHT LOSS

SURGICAL WEIGHT LOSS SEMINAR
Learn more about the bariatric surgery options at Franciscan Health at this free seminar. Staff will discuss the different procedures, follow-up services, nutritional and lifestyle requirements as well as support programs. Seminars are held at the Franciscan Health Weight Loss Center, 5230-A E. Stop 11 Road, Suite 190. For upcoming seminar dates or to register, call toll-free (833) 439-3444.
Q. If my teenager gets regular sports physicals, does he still need annual well-visit exams?

A: Teens face many changes, both physical and emotional. Sports physicals ensure your young athlete is prepared to play, but your child’s pediatrician can ensure your teen is developing healthily, inside and out.

Well visits can include physical exams and assessments and can address nutrition, good health habits and how to avoid risky behaviors. As with adults, the teens’ wellness visit can be the time to identify potential health problems and prescribe preventive steps or order additional screenings.

And let’s not forget those growth spurts, puberty and raging hormones! Knowing your child’s developmental background, a pediatrician can better guide you and your teen with his or her physical, emotional and sexual health.

As important as all this is, probably the most beneficial aspect of your teen’s regular wellness visits is that they encourage your teen to take responsibility for his or her own health. Teens can opt to speak with their pediatricians one-on-one and to ask their own health-related questions or raise other concerns in private. By doing so, teens become more invested in their health and understand the need to take responsibility for their well-being.

Aileen Puno, MD, is a board-certified pediatrician at County Line Pediatrics, a Franciscan Physician Network practice in Greenwood. To make an appointment, call (844) FPN-APPT.

Q. One of my pregnant friends has discussed planning her delivery instead of waiting for labor to start. Is this something I should consider?

A: While delivering an infant at 38 or 39 weeks instead of 40 doesn’t sound like a bad thing—sometimes that happens naturally, of course—it is much better for the baby if you wait. We now have much more information about what happens in a baby’s development during the last two weeks of gestation, and the impact of an early delivery can be significant.

For instance, during week 37 and 38, a baby’s heart and lungs are still developing. Even delivering at week 39 can increase your baby’s chances of needing intensive care and having problems with breathing and feeding.

There are situations when the benefits of an early delivery are beneficial to the mother, especially if the mother has diabetes, uncontrolled hypertension or whose water breaks prematurely. Other reasons, however, like having trouble sleeping, not wanting to gain more weight or wanting to schedule around family events, are not as important as those last weeks of your child’s time in your womb.

Theodore Seger, MD, is a board-certified family physician who also provides obstetrical services to expectant patients. He practices at South 31 Family Care, a Franciscan Physician Network practice. To make an appointment, call (844) FPN-APPT.
Franciscan Health hospitals in Indianapolis, Mooresville and Carmel participate in the following provider networks:

- Advantage Health Solutions
- Aetna
- Anthem
- Beech Street
- Choicecare Humana
- Cigna
- Cofinity (formerly known as PPOM)
- Corvel
- Encore Health Network
- Envision Health
- Lumenos
- Managed Health Services (MHS Ambetter)
- MDwise
- MultiPlan
- Premier Healthway
- Private Healthcare Systems (PHCS)
- Sagamore Health Network
- St. Francis Health Network (SFHN)
- SIHO (Southeastern Indiana Health Organization)
- Unicare
- United Healthcare

In addition to participating in the traditional Medicare program, Franciscan Health also participates in the following Medicare Advantage plans:

- AARP (administered through United Health)
- Aetna
- Anthem
- Humana
- United Healthcare

This is not a complete list. If your health plan is not listed, call your insurance company to confirm that Franciscan Health and its physicians participate.

For more information, call toll-free (866) 903-0436. This list is subject to change. Check with your insurance plan to confirm provider participation.
Franciscan Health facility brings urgent care to the heart of Greenwood

A new Franciscan ExpressCare urgent care center opens in Greenwood on Wednesday, Nov. 14. Located at 1703 W. Stones Crossing Road, Greenwood, the Franciscan Health facility will be open every day from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Services are covered by most insurance and managed care plans. No appointments are needed, and free on-site parking is available.

Franciscan Health at Stones Crossing also will be home to several primary care and specialty physician offices, including family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, plastic surgery and vein care.

ExpressCare services include:
- Treatment for cuts, scrapes and skin rashes
- Care for minor illnesses and injuries
- Treatment of minor burns
- Breathing treatments
- X-ray and lab services
- Electrocardiograms
- School, sports and camp physicals
- Flu and tetanus shots
- Employment and insurance physicals
- Drug and alcohol screenings
- Treatment for work-related injuries