

Health matters



Cheltenham Imaging Centre

Dr Alistair Smith from Cheltenham Knee Unit and Sports Injuries Clinic discusses sports medicine.

MANY of us enjoy regular physical activity and play sport, some just for fun and others at a competitive level.

The speciality known as "sports and exercise medicine" has evolved to cater for the specific needs of those who enjoy exercise, from the occasional jogger to the elite athlete.

Sports medicine considers not only the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation from injury, but also the principles of injury prevention and performance enhancement through appropriate training, along with such elements as nutrition and psychology.

It is therefore necessary to take a broad view of the athlete and presenting complaint – it's inadequate simply to make a diagnosis and then treat that condition in isolation.

The question "why has this injury occurred?" must always be asked.

The challenge for the sports physician is to correctly identify and address the underlying factors which have contributed to the injury, thus reducing the chances of recurrence on return to exercise.

Some causes, such as direct trauma, are obvious but there may be more subtle factors such as inappropriate equipment, poor sporting technique, errors in training patterns or problems with nutrition or hydration.

It's of paramount importance to diagnose not only the injury, but also the cause.

Optimum treatment will consider both of these aspects.

The Sports and Exercise Medicine Clinic offers a "one-stop" diagnostic service which includes taking a comprehensive history of the apparent problem and a thorough physical examination.

If required, immediate access to X-rays, ultrasound scanning and MRI imaging is available.

Onward referral for further specialist opinion can be arranged if indicated.

Consideration will be given not only to the presenting symptoms, but also to the formulation of an individual rehabilitation plan which might involve physiotherapy, chiropractic and strength and conditioning coaching.

Specific advice can also be given to minimise the likelihood of recurrent injury while also aiming to optimise performance on return to activity.

■ For more information, telephone 01242 535911,

www.cheltenhamkneeunit.co.uk.

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