

## Growing Pains...Or is it? an experienced Physiotherapist's perspective

If you have taken the opportunity to read the articles we have on our web page about growing pains then you will have some understanding of this condition. (Something that I personally suffered with when I was younger – a lot younger!!). Over the twenty plus years that I have been a physiotherapist I have come across many young people who were suffering from pains that have been attributed to growing pains which in reality were not growing pains at all.

They had been told that the pains they are suffering will go away eventually (in two years or more) and that they should just restrict themselves from being too active. Also that there is nothing that can be done to help them other than rest and waiting it out. The young person often gets upset at not being able to participate in sport and other active pursuits that they might enjoy and the thought that they may not be able to do these things for two years can be quite devastating for many of them.

In the Articles you will note that if your child is complaining of pains that you think might be growing pains it is wise to get them assessed by a physiotherapist. I believe this is great advice as from my experience a lot of these pains are due to other conditions that if addressed can allow your child to return to sport, activity or even becoming pain free again in a short space of time.

A great example of this are the conditions of Osgood-Schlatters, Severs Disease and Tendinopathy. (Read about these conditions in our patient information section) If I had a dollar coin for each young person I have seen who were suffering from one of these three conditions but had been told that they have growing pains and there was nothing that could be done to help, then I would have a lot of dollar coins.

All three of these conditions have a good outcome once they have been identified and a treatment plan has been put into place. (Thus the need to be assessed by the Physiotherapist) Although the treatment plan may include some manual therapy (hands on treatment) most of the treatment plan will include very specific exercises and stretching. Mostly to address poor body movement (biomechanics), which create excessive load on their body and muscle weakness/lack of control that stop the body getting into good movement patterns.

The reason I really enjoy treating these younger patients is that if they stick to their treatment programme they get better. This means they can get back to the sport or active pursuit that they love and can start to enjoy themselves again. Often the young person is keen to get rid of their pain and so motivating them to do their exercises is not that hard. In fact once the child starts to see improvements they often become enthusiastic about their very specific exercise programme without a lot of prompting from Mum and Dad.

Keeping kids active is my goal with treatment and getting them back to the things they love doing is going to keep them active. So don't put it off, get it assessed and get them back to being as active as they can be.

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