

Growing Pains

By Shaleek Wilson



Dr. Francois Lalonde
CHOC Orthopedic Specialist

Dr. Lalonde is the director of the hip program at CHOC Children's. In addition to his medical degree, Dr. Lalonde has a master's in medical education. He is one of 10 orthopedic surgeons in the U.S. selected to participate in the American Orthopedic Surgeons Leadership Fellow Program and he is on the board of the California Orthopedic Association.

Dr. Lalonde's philosophy of care: "Family and patient engagement. I want them to understand they have options and engage them in their treatment plan so they can recover as quickly as possible."

EDUCATION:
University of Toronto School of Medicine

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:
Orthopedic Surgery

3 to 6

WEEKS IT USUALLY TAKES FOR A GROWTH PLATE INJURY TO HEAL

15 to 30

PERCENT OF ALL CHILDHOOD FRACTURES THAT AFFECT THE GROWTH PLATE



80,000

NUMBER OF CHILDREN 14 AND UNDER TREATED IN ERS FOR TRAMPOLINE-RELATED INJURIES

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

When a child takes a fall, they may impact their growth plate. What is it? "It's a [developing] area of the long bone, like the femur or tibia that contributes to the length of your body," says Dr. Lalonde. Located close to a joint, including the hip, knee or ankle, the growth plate remains open until age 15 for girls and age 17 for boys.

PROTECTIVE GEAR

"Wrists splints in skateboarding and certain roller skating activities would prevent a lot of fractures, especially growth plate fractures," says Dr. Lalonde. "It only takes a few minutes to put on, doesn't limit the enjoyment of the activity and can go a long way in preventing a fracture. And when trotting on the trampoline, to avoid crashes, there should only be one child on at a time."



IS IT BROKEN?

If it looks crooked or there's a significant amount of swelling, you may be dealing with a broken bone, says Dr. Lalonde. "In general, if you touch the bone and your child jumps from the pain, you should get an X-ray," he says, adding that some fracture patterns are pretty subtle and go unnoticed for several days.

If it seems like a mild injury, parents can:

- » Apply ice
- » Provide a temporary splint
- » Check-in with primary doctor the next day

DOES TIME HEAL ALL BROKEN BONES?

"Luckily, most growth plate injuries don't cause any damage to the growth of the bone," says Dr. Lalonde. "Most kids will get their motion back around the joint on their own."



Keeping Your Athlete in Top Shape

When it comes to sports-related injuries, the experts at the CHOC Children's Orthopaedic Institute know that children aren't just small adults. Special training and experience in pediatric sports medicine allow our specialists to appropriately treat the medical needs unique to children and teens. Our specialists work one-on-one with each patient to develop an individualized diagnosis and treatment plan —with an emphasis on preserving future growth and function, and a safe return to play.

Find out more at www.choc.org/sports

