



# Pediatric and Adolescent Sports Medicine Update

4th Quarter 2011

## Kiteboarding Injury Prevention

by Drew E. Warnick, M.D.

Many people enjoy wind sports every year, however few prepare for the rigorous physical demands that these sports place on the body.

Although they can be safe sports, unexpected injuries may occur with improper preparation, varied wind conditions or poor judgment. Many injuries can be prevented by proper physical preparation, suitable and properly adjusted equipment, and common sense.

### The most common issues that predispose people to injury are:

- Kiteboarding without rest
- Kiteboarding above ability level
- Improper equipment according to the wind conditions
- Faulty equipment
- Failure to launch and land the kite properly and safely
- Kiteboarding in gusty conditions
- Kiteboarding on or near dangerous terrain
- Failure to identify and stay away from dangerous obstacles



### What causes kiteboarding injuries?

Most kiteboarding injuries are traumatic, caused by falling on dangerous terrain, or kiting in unpredictable wind conditions.

### What are some of the most common Kiteboarding injuries?

The wide range of injuries involves many areas of the body, including: shoulder joint dislocations or Fractures; closed head injuries; elbow, wrist, hand, and thumb injuries; lower extremity fractures and sprains; and cuts and abrasions by shells/rocks/coral.

### How are Kiteboarding injuries treated?

Fortunately, most kiteboarding injuries are minor and can be treated with rest, bracing, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, and avoidance of secondary injury. However, some injuries may require surgical intervention and recovery periods may vary. It is best to be evaluated by your orthopaedic doctor before returning to kiteboarding.





**Children's Orthopaedic  
and Scoliosis Surgery Associates, LLP**

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## How can kiteboarding injuries be prevented?

Getting instruction prior to kiteboarding. Instructors can educate beginners on the importance of safe conditions, proper equipment use, and safe kiteboarding techniques. Appropriate equipment is critical to being safe. Poor functioning equipment, as well as equipment that is improperly sized can cause injury. Knowing the safety functions of your kite is crucial to avoid severe injury. Staying away from dangerous terrain is of utmost importance. Kiting in wind conditions that allow safe return to your launching spot is always recommended. Preventative equipment is critical to being safe. Helmets should be used and can prevent disastrous and even fatal accidents. Safety vests can lessen impact to the trunk. Wetsuits, water shoes, and gloves can prevent cuts and abrasions from shells/rocks/coral.

**Oversight** All kite boarders play an important role in educating others about safe practices. They should help each other avoid injuries by sharing information about terrain, helping land and launch kites, encouraging professional instruction, and cautioning others about dangerous conditions. It is not advised to kite board alone.

**Common Sense Precautions** Changing wind and tide conditions can dramatically increase the complexity of terrain quickly. Knowing the terrain where you are kiting and the conditions that you are kiting is a basic principle.

**Safety tips provide general information only and are not a substitute for you own good judgment.**



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