

THE HEALTH SOURCE

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From the grade school athlete... to the weekend warrior

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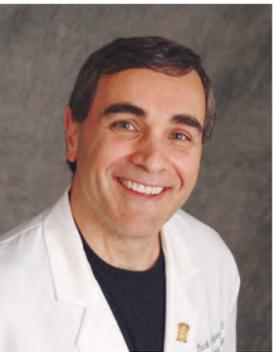


CabellHuntington Hospital

M.U. Division of Sports Medicine provides leading-edge care.

It might be a new pair of shoes, or maybe a change in workout. You could be a high school or college athlete, or a 70-year-old woman who enjoys walking in Ritter Park.

Whatever the reasons – and whoever you are – the Division of Sports Medicine in the Marshall University Department of Orthopaedic Surgery has the expertise and knowledge to handle injuries that involve joints and bones.



Charles Giangarra, MD

“In the past 15 to 20 years, so many people have jumped on the bandwagon of getting healthier and becoming more active, we’re seeing patients from pediatric to geriatric,” said Dr. Charles Giangarra, Chief of Marshall Athletics and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine. The first orthopaedic specialist to join the sports medicine team, Giangarra’s fellowship training came under two of sports medicine’s founding fathers and has included stints working with professional and Olympic-level athletes. “The care you’ll get will be the same that the student-athletes get at Marshall. We have a very broad definition of what an athlete is here -- we call it the active, health conscious and athletic population, from the grade school athlete to the weekend warrior.”

“If you’re active and something is getting in the way of what you want to

do, you have a problem, and we’ll help to get you back on track.”

In the past few years, the department has added experienced personnel to handle the wide variety of injuries and concerns presented to the department. Giangarra’s expertise is in arthroscopic management of injuries, utilizing a camera called an arthroscope and instruments to access and repair injuries without a large incision. Dr. Greg Hendricks, the group’s primary care sports medicine specialist, sees patients with non-operative musculoskeletal problems. Podiatric surgeon Zach Tankersley, DPM, provides expertise in injuries involving the foot and ankle.

“Being a part of the university, it’s very common for departments to have subspecialties. We have become a multispecialty orthopaedic department like many universities and large multi-specialty clinics such as the Cleveland Clinic,” Giangarra said.

All work closely with physical therapists and Cabell Huntington Hospital’s SMART (Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation Therapies) Center, which is located on the ground floor of the Marshall University Medical Center atrium adjacent to the department, to provide personalized care for patients suffering with a wide range of orthopaedic injuries.

“We have great relationships with a number of physical therapists around the Tri-State, as well as the staff at the SMART Center right across the hallway,” Giangarra said. “With them being open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., it’s very convenient to send patients over there and then be able to walk across and check in to see how they’re getting along.”



Charles Giangarra, MD, Chief of Marshall Athletics and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine, follows up with a patient who had knee surgery after suffering an injury in a skiing accident.

“The care you’ll get will be the same that the student-athletes get at Marshall.”

-- Dr. Charles Giangarra, Chief of Marshall Athletics and Orthopaedic Sports Medicine.

The biggest share of problems treated by Giangarra and his staff concern the knees and shoulders, but injuries to the ankle (with a sprain being the most common injury in sports), hip, back and elbow are also common. Patients might present with pain, decreased motion or swell-

ing of a joint to indicate an initial problem. The first step taken by the department physicians is to determine what brought on the problem.

Many problems patients bring to the sports medicine staff can be attributed to a workout shift. For example, an athlete who has approached their senior year of high school and is gunning for a scholarship.

Other problems are simply the result of overuse.

“Most sports injuries are due to overuse – throwing a ball too often or running too hard without warming up properly. Nowadays, our athletes are working out 12 months a year and they’re working hard to stay in shape and they’re at increased risk for problems because of that,” he explained.

For those who don’t compete athletically, problems creep in with something as minor as a stiff, new pair of shoes or a pulled muscle at the start of a new workout regime, the result, perhaps, of a New Year’s resolution.

“In reality, athletes are a very small portion of the

patients we see. So many more people are seeing the benefits of staying healthy instead of being a couch potato, but they go to work out and they encounter a problem early on because they haven’t been properly trained how they should exercise, and they get frustrated and give up,” Giangarra said.

The best preventative medicine an active individual can partake in is educating themselves about the level of activity they can participate in.

“We help people understand how to prevent these injuries, too. We’re not just here to diagnose, treat and operate,” he explained.

To that end, the sports medicine physicians staff a clinic on Saturdays that begins in August, just as football practices are beginning, and ends in May as the school year is winding down. Every Saturday from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., Giangarra and his staff make themselves available to anyone from children through senior citizens who’ve noticed a potential orthopedic problem and need advice. The clinic is free.

While the visits don’t provide treatment, patients can be assessed and advised on what they should do about the injury on a first-come, first-served basis.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a track star or a football player or a recreational golfer, we’re open to see you. We’re usually manned with an athletic trainer and a physical therapist and we can give you some advice about what’s going on,” Giangarra said. “If you need X-rays or further treatment, we’ll make that recommendation.”

To confirm the availability of the sports medicine clinics, call Dr. Giangarra’s office at (304) 691-1262.



The Marshall University Division of Sports Medicine works closely with the Cabell Huntington Hospital SMART Center to help provide comprehensive rehabilitation services for patients with a wide range of orthopaedic injuries.



Dr. Giangarra’s affiliation with Marshall University athletics teams means even weekend warrior athletes will receive the same care provided to Division I student-athletes.

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