

Metro Health

Sports Medicine

The Metro Health Sports Medicine Team doesn't just help athletes and active individuals kick their games into high gear — they help them sprint, jump, run, play, dunk and tackle too. As trained primary care physicians and physical therapists, the Metro Health Sports Medicine Team is committed to ensuring proper treatment and prevention techniques related to healthy, active lifestyles.

"We don't just treat athletes," said Terence Reuben, PT, CPT, CSC, physical therapist and liaison to Metro Health Sports Medicine. "We're here for everyone."

Primarily, however, the Team does treat a large number of athletes of all ages and skill levels throughout West Michigan... athletes for whom you've probably cheered. Metro Health Sports Medicine provides team care for Aquinas College, Calvin College, Cornerstone University, Davenport University, Grand Rapids Community College and Grand Valley State University. In addition, they provide medical services for professional athletic teams including the Grand Rapids Griffins, Grand Rapids Rampage, West Michigan Whitecaps and West Michigan Edge.

"West Michigan Edge is a professional soccer team," said Reuben. "As their sports trainer, I provide sideline coverage. That means, when something happens, we're on the field first."

When it comes to those who play hard and work even harder, serious injuries do result. For many, they are necessary sacrifices. "We deal with all kinds of things — nose bleeds, head injuries, issues with hydration," said Reuben.



"It varies. One time a soccer player jumped to head a ball and fell on his neck. His neck started having spasms, and that's when our job was really important. We were there first to prevent further injury from teammates who might have turned him over to try to help. Then we stabilized him until we could transport him by ambulance because we didn't know if his neck was broken."

The Team also participates in many area events and programs such as the Reed's Lake Run, Metro Health Grand Rapids Marathon, Area 11 Special Olympics, Griffins Youth Hockey, Great Lakes Triathlon and the Fifth Third River Bank Run.

"We set up medical tents for things like the River Bank Run," said Reuben. "A mile or two apart, or at the start and finish. Some years and runs bring issues that are more serious than others. In an effort to be prepared for any eventuality, stations are always staffed by a physician, registered nurse and therapist at the minimum."

(616) 252-SPORT

“We address issues of hydration — over hydration and dehydration,” said Reuben. “We administer IV fluids. Athletes sometimes forget to drink water when they’re running in the cold, and it leads to severe cramping. In this case, we administer electrolytes and blankets to control shivering and stabilize. Sometimes we just stand there and hose people down. Our best day is when we do nothing because it means people are being safe, but that is why we are there in the first place — to help.”

Addressing physical complications athletes face doesn’t always mean pulling someone from a race or game to sit on the sidelines with a cup of juice. The Team recognizes the incredible drive that powers serious athletes and respects the need to intelligently push on.

“As a competitor, if someone told me not to do it because I could be hurt, I wouldn’t listen,” said Reuben, who is an avid triathlete and runner. “We practice therapeutic and technical management. This means that we identify injuries, determine how to manage them, look at what the athlete is able to do without worsening an injury and help the athlete get back to what they love doing safely.”

For example, if a swimmer has a sore shoulder or has wrenched a muscle, a Team member would identify why the motion hurts and then suggest ways to control and prevent the pain through different exercises or movements that will minimize stress to the area. If knees or ankles hurt while running, are things like shoes a problem?

But the Team isn’t just about immediate, hands-on care. Much of what it does involves public education and community awareness of sports-related issues through presentations aimed at specific target groups.

“For example, we might offer a lecture about ‘How to Stretch or Warm Up,’” said Reuben. “This kind of thing keeps people healthy, and it also functions as a screen to drive patients to us.”

With fellowship-trained physicians and specialists in Metro Health Cascade, Caledonia and Hudsonville locations, the Sports Medicine Team is doing more and more to ensure the best patient experience possible. All patients wishing to make an appointment or seek a therapist referral can call the sports medicine hotline at 252-SPORT. All locations run on the same accessed system and hotline... meaning patients will be directed to the closest, most convenient locations and sports medicine professionals.

Though the generation of new patients and expansion is important to the Team, it is even more imperative that physicians and specialists work with athletes and active individuals through every step of their healthy lives. The genuine care given to all patients, as both sports medicine practitioners and fellow athletes, is what patients carry with them.

“We run right along side athletes at races and events,” said Reuben. “We do talk, but we walk the walk... literally.”



Terence Reuben at the Reed's Lake Run