To make a physical therapy referral:

- Give your patient an order for physical therapy evaluation and treatment. Visit choa.org/forms to request our order pads and in-services.

- Direct the parent to choa.org/sportsregistration to register for an appointment online. Once the information is submitted, a Children’s staff member will contact the patient to schedule an appointment and answer any questions.

Visit choa.org/sportsmedlocations for a list of locations and contact information.
These guidelines are intended to support your clinical referral decisions to either orthopaedic physicians or sports medicine physical therapy. Follow the center categories and choose the appropriate corresponding column based on your patient’s case history. If the majority of responses fall in the acute macrotraumatic injury column, the patient should be referred to an orthopaedic physician. Conversely, if most responses fall in the chronic microtraumatic injury column, the patient may be referred directly to sports medicine physical therapy.

### Back pain
**cervical/thoracic and lumbar/pelvic**

**Acute macrotraumatic injury**
- Onset: Acute, traumatic or acute on chronic
- Pain: Along bony landmarks
- Movement: Sports with primary extension bias
- Symptoms: Symptoms worsen with extension
- Possible: Absent
- Refer to orthopaedics

**Chronic microtraumatic injury (overuse)**
- Onset: Typically atraumatic, chronic
- Pain: Along soft tissues
- Movement: Sports without extension bias
- Symptoms: Symptoms worsen with flexion or rotation
- Possible: Absent
- Refer to sports medicine physical therapy

### Extremity pain
**upper/lower extremity**

**Acute macrotraumatic injury**
- Onset: Typically weight bearing, external force applied
- Mechanism: Unable to participate following injury
- Symptoms: At time of injury: pop, rip, “gave out”
- EDEMA: Present
- ADLS/SPORTS: Unable to participate since injury
- Refer to orthopaedics

**Chronic microtraumatic injury (overuse)**
- Onset: Insidious
- Mechanism: Typically unknown
- Participation: Progressively diminished tolerance following injury
- Symptoms: At time of injury: insidious
- EDEMA: Minimal or absent
- ADLS/SPORTS: Continued participation with pain since injury
- Refer to sports medicine physical therapy

If your patient has an emergency or life threatening condition, stop and call 911 or send him to the closest hospital emergency department.