

HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

A Fact Sheet for PARENTS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

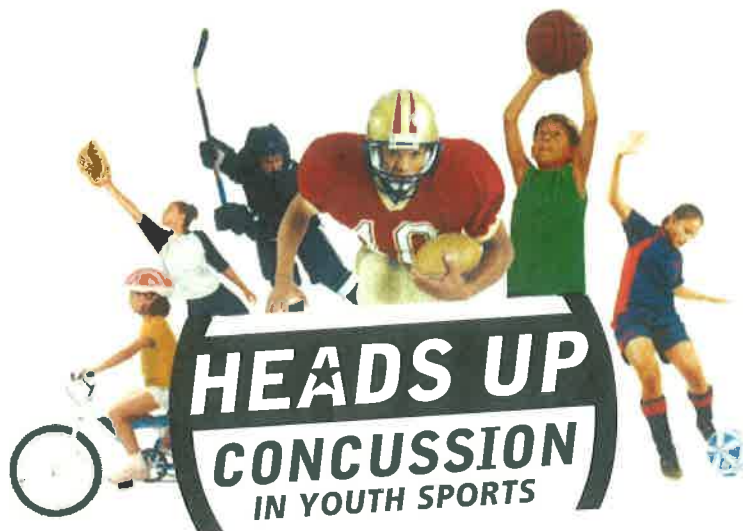
Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

- 1. Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
- 2. Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- 3. Tell your child’s coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache or "pressure" in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

1. **Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
2. **Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
3. **Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

FILL IN THE NAME AND NUMBER OF YOUR LOCAL HOSPITAL(S) BELOW:

Hospital Name: _____

Hospital Phone: _____

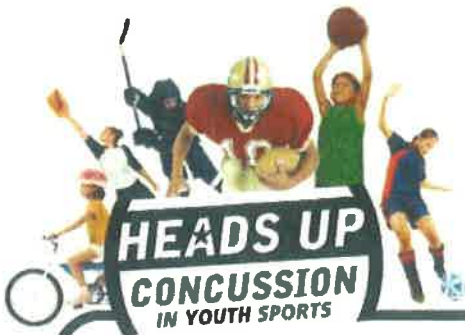
Hospital Name: _____

Hospital Phone: _____

For immediate attention, CALL 911

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For more information and to order additional materials **free-of-charge**, visit:
www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports



A QUIZ FOR COACHES, ATHLETES, AND PARENTS

Review the "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports" materials and test your knowledge of concussion.

Mark each of the following statements as True (T) or False (F)

1. A concussion is a brain injury.
2. Concussions can occur in any organized or unorganized recreational sport or activity.
3. You can't see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury.
4. Following a coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport, practicing good sportsmanship at all times, and using the proper sports equipment are all ways that athletes can prevent a concussion.
5. Concussions can be caused by a fall or by a bump or blow to the head or body.
6. Concussion can happen even if the athlete hasn't been knocked out or lost consciousness.
7. Nausea, headaches, sensitivity to light or noise, and difficulty concentrating are some of the symptoms of a concussion.
8. Athletes who have a concussion should not return to play until they are symptom-free and have received approval from a doctor or health care professional.
9. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems.

ANSWER KEY: 1. True; 2. True; 3. True; 4. True; 5. True; 6. True; 7. True; 8. True; 9. True

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