

PARENT'S CONCUSSION FACT SHEET

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost, even if they do not directly hit their head.

The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common. Concussions can occur, however, in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity. As many as 3.8 million sports and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

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:

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians	Symptoms Reported by Athlete
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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• Cannot recall events prior to hit or fall• Cannot recall events after hit or fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. 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 or activity. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

**Remember, you can't always see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury.
It's better to miss some games than the whole season.**

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION