

Time Out for Concussion

By:

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What Should I Do If I Think I Have A Concussion?

Don't Hide It, Report It:

Ignoring your symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes symptoms worse. Tell your coach, parent and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. Don't let anyone pressure you into continuing to practice or play with a concussion.

Get Checked Out:

Only a health care professional can tell if you have a concussion and when it's OK to return to play. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out and the team can perform at its best. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

Take Care Of Your Brain:

A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities. Most athletes with a concussion get better and return to sports, but it is important to rest and give your brain time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs while your brain is still healing can cause long-term problems that may change your life forever.

Concussion FACT & FICTION

Fiction: I wasn't knocked out cold, therefore I didn't suffer a concussion.

Fact: You can get a concussion even if you are not 'knocked out.'

Fiction: Sitting out a shift after a big hit will allow a player time to shake it off and be ready to play.

Fact: A player who looks like he or she may have sustained a concussion should not return to play, no matter what he or she says, until being thoroughly checked out by a physician.

Fiction: Concussions are less likely in younger players because they weigh less and don't hit as hard.

Fact: Because younger players tend to have slower reaction times they may

be less prepared to see a hit coming and be prepared to brace for it.

Fiction: Boys are more likely to sustain a concussion than girls are because girls play no-check hockey.

Fact: Just because girls don't check doesn't mean they aren't at risk for a concussion. An NCAA study showed that women's ice hockey players had the highest rate of reported concussions among all collegiate sports.

Fiction: Wearing a HECC-approved helmet and properly fitted mouth guard will protect a player from a concussion.

Fact: While advancements in head protection and mouth guards have greatly improved, and companies continue to spend millions on research and development, there is no current scientific proof that a helmet and mouth guard can prevent a concussion.

Fiction: Brain injuries in kids are not as serious as in adults because the developing brain is more resistant to injury.

Fact: The child's developing brain may actually be less able to tolerate injury than the adult brain.

How Serious? Ask These Guys

These Former NHLers Know First-Hand That Sometime's It's Better To Sit Out Willingly Than To Be Forced Out Of The Game

Pat LaFontaine Two-time U.S. Olympian, whose 15-year NHL career ended in 1999 after five concussions:

"Make sure you are not having recurring symptoms before you're active again. Do not go back on the ice, do not go back to work, until you are 100 percent cleared and symptom-free. Once you have a concussion and return too soon, that's when the real damage can be done."

Mike Richter Career cut short in 2003 due to the effects of post-concussion syndrome.

"If it was any other part of my body, I wouldn't have a problem with it."

Jeremy Roenick U.S. Hockey Hall of Famer, believes that he sustained 11 concussions during his 21 NHL seasons.

"I think about it a lot. It's always in the back of my mind. I am very cautious

about where I put my body because with the number of head injuries that I've had, you never know when that next one might be the killer."

Eric Lindros Eight concussions during 13 NHL seasons led to his retirement in 2007 at the age of 34.

"The fact is you're given one brain and if you injure it, it's not like you can trade it in after 100,000 miles."

Tim Connolly NHL career has been plagued by numerous concussions.

"I just had headaches every day constantly for the first few months. Little by little they would go away, but it was tough to concentrate. Even reading was tough."