

CONCUSSIONS

A **concussion** is any injury to the brain that disrupts normal brain function on a temporary or permanent basis. Concussions are typically caused by a blow or jolt to the head. Concussions can happen in any sport but more often occur in collision sports, such as football, rugby, or ice hockey. They also are common in contact sports that don't require helmets, such as soccer, basketball, wrestling, and lacrosse.

Sports-related concussions in youth athletes are underreported. Coaches, parents and teachers often fail to recognize the signs of concussions in young athletes. Coaches and athletic trainers should be trained in the identification of concussions, and refer any student athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion to a licensed physician.

Below are some facts regarding concussions according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):

- Almost 500,000 emergency department visits for traumatic brain injury are made annually by children ages 0 to 14 years.
- 40% of sports-related concussions involved children between the ages of 8 to 13 years.
- 50% of "second impact syndrome" incidents – brain injury caused from a premature return to activity after suffering initial concussion – results in death.
- Concussions affect child athletes beyond impact sports like football and hockey; sports less commonly considered potential sources of head injury includes volleyball, soccer and cheerleading.
- Football has the highest rate of concussion in sports.
- Girls have higher concussion rates than boys in similar sports.



After a concussion has been diagnosed, it is important for the athlete and parent/guardian to understand symptoms to look for.

Signs to be observed by the parent/guardian are:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position

- Forgets instruction
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms reported by the athlete:

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

When should you call for help? Call 911 if your athlete has a seizure, passes out or is confused or hard to wake up. Call your Dr. immediately if your athlete has new or worse vomiting, seems less alert, or has new weakness or numbness in any part of the body. Watch closely for changes in your athlete's health and be sure to contact your doctor if your athlete does not get better as expected or has any new symptoms, such as headaches, trouble concentrating, or changes in mood.

For more information on the symptoms of and the recovery from a concussion please visit the University of Michigan's Neuro Sport website at www.MichiganNeuroSport.com.