



Concussions

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- ◆ Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- ◆ Changes the way the brain normally works
- ◆ Can occur during practice or games
- ◆ Can happen **even if you haven't been knocked out**
- ◆ Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- ◆ Headache or head "pressure" feeling
- ◆ Nausea or vomiting
- ◆ Dizziness or unsteadiness
- ◆ Blurred or double vision
- ◆ Bothered by light or noise
- ◆ Feeling tired, hazy, or groggy
- ◆ Difficulty paying attention
- ◆ Difficulty with memory
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Just doesn't "feel right"

What should you do if you think you have a concussion?

- ◆ **Tell your coaches and parents.**
Never ignore a bump or blow to head even if you think you feel fine. Also, tell the coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.

- ◆ **Get a medical evaluation.** A doctor or other health care provider can evaluate you and tell you whether you had a concussion and when you are OK to return to practice and/or games.
- ◆ **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, **your brain needs time to heal.** While your brain is still healing, it is more likely to be re-injured with a second concussion. A second concussion can cause much more damage to the brain **and can even be potentially fatal.** It is vital that you rest until you are cleared to return to activity by your medical provider.

How can I prevent a concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- ◆ Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- ◆ Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- ◆ Use the proper protective equipment for your sport (including helmets, mouth guards, chin guards and eye protection.)
- ◆ In order for the equipment to protect you, it must be
 - ⇒ The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
 - ⇒ Worn correctly and fitted properly
 - ⇒ Worn every time you play

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

