THE FACTS

- A concussion is a **brain injury**.
- All concussions are **serious**.
- Concussions can occur **without** loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur **in any sport**.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they **first occur** can help prevent further injury or even death.

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.

The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common.¹ 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.²

RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.  
   **-and-**

2. Any change in the athlete’s behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. (See the signs and symptoms of concussion listed on the next page.)

*It's better to miss one game than the whole season.*
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion. Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

4. Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. Prevent common long-term problems and the rare second impact syndrome by delaying the athlete’s return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.

REFERENCES


If you think your athlete has sustained a concussion... take him/her out of play, and seek the advice of a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.