

HEADS+UP CONCUSSION IN SPORTS



A FACT SHEET FOR **ATHLETES**

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head.
- Can change the way your brain normally works.
- Can range from mild to severe.
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport.
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged" or had your "bell rung."

How can I prevent a concussion?

It's different for every sport. But there are steps you can take to protect yourself from concussion.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sports.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
 - Appropriate for the game, position, and activity
 - Well maintained
 - Properly fitted
 - Used every time you play

How do I know if I've had a concussion?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up days or weeks after the injury. It's best to see a health care professional if you think you might have a concussion. An undiagnosed concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other everyday activities. It also raises your risk for additional, serious injury.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- Nausea (feeling that you might vomit)
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Headache
- Feeling sluggish
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Confusion

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

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical check up.** A health care professional can tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to recover.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death in rare cases. Severe brain injury can change your whole life.

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