

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF CONCUSSION

Concussions are a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) that can be caused by a direct hit to the head or by a hit to the body causing the head and neck to experience the sudden movement commonly known as whiplash. Only a small number of athletes who suffer concussions are actually knocked unconscious. For the remainder of athletes, the signs of concussion can be varied and difficult to diagnose.

Many athletes themselves have a hard time recognizing that they have even sustained a concussion. Adding to the confusion, post-concussion symptoms can last from minutes to weeks and months causing significant concern with the athlete, their family, athletic training and coaching staff.

Feelings of foggy-headedness, slowed information processing, headaches and general tiredness are commonly experienced after a concussion. In addition to feeling off-balanced, difficulty with concentration and attention, worsening of school grades and sleep disturbances may also be signs of a concussion.

In the past, athletes were told to play through their “dings” and “bell-ringers” as they were thought to be just harmless nuisances of collision sports such as football and soccer. However, according to more recent scientific studies, repeated head trauma may lead to serious problems later in life such as depression and dementia.

Repeated head injuries have also been associated with a greater likelihood of sustaining future concussions. In younger athletes, sudden death has been reported in those who sustain a concussion when they haven’t fully recovered from a previous concussion.

For these reasons, it is very important for all athletes who have suffered a concussion to seek prompt medical attention by a health professional knowledgeable about head injuries. These experts can fully evaluate the athlete and determine whether the brain has fully healed from its injury and when it is safe for the athlete to return to play.

For more information on concussions, visit www.GetInTheGameOhio.com or call (614) 4-HEALTH to find a sports medicine physician.



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