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## Children's Health Tip of the Day


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### A Kick in the Head -- Young Athletes at Risk From Concussions

A little "ding" to the head might not seem like enough to keep your child from getting back in the game. But, according to recent studies, maybe it should be.

#### Study shows kids get back in play too soon

A recent report in the American Journal of Sports Medicine says that young athletes who suffer concussions during sports are being sent back in to play too soon, risking further injury and possible long-term effects.

#### What a concussion does to your child's head

Concussion is a head trauma caused by the violent rocking back and forth of the brain inside of the skull that occurs with a sudden blow to the head or upper body.

#### Signs of a concussion

Symptoms of concussion include:

- Disorientation
- Amnesia (not being able to remember what happened right before the injury)
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Uncoordinated hand-eye movements
- Double vision or fuzzy vision
- Loss of consciousness

#### Recovery and future risk

Each year, about one in 10 high school athletes suffer concussions. An athlete can fully

recover from a mild concussion as long as the brain has had time to heal before returning to the sport. However, once an athlete sustains an initial concussion, he is at higher risk for re-injury and more susceptible to further, more serious brain damage. In fact, high school athletes with a history of two or more concussions may be at risk for long-term cognitive impairment.

Under current guidelines, an athlete who shows no sign of concussion after 15 minutes can be sent back into the game. But the study indicated that those athletes can suffer memory decline and other symptoms for several days beyond the game in which they were injured. In addition, if the athlete suffers a second concussion before the brain has recovered from the first, it can lead to massive swelling of the brain and cause irreparable brain damage or death.

### **What to do if your child is hit in the head**

If your child receives a blow to the head during sports, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends:

- Seek medical attention right away. A healthcare professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your teen to return to sports.
- Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal, especially in young athletes, and only a medical professional can determine when it is safe for your child to get back in the game.
- Inform the coaches about any recent concussion. Coaches should know if your teen has suffered a concussion in any sport. This knowledge will allow the coach to keep your child from activities that could result in another concussion.

**Reviewed by:**

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