

PRESS RELEASE

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Raising Concussion Awareness

June 3, 2009: Each year, it is estimated that nearly 300,000 sports-related traumatic brain injuries occur in the United States, and most can be classified as concussions. During 2001-2005, children and youth ages 5-18 years accounted for 2.4 million sports-related emergency department visits annually, of which 6% (135,000) involved a concussion. In basic terms, a concussion is a brain injury, typically caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. With youth participating in organized sports now more than ever, it is imperative that parents and coaches remain aware of the facts regarding concussions.

With more and more research being conducted, it is known that concussions are a lot more serious than previously thought. Unfortunately, the not-so-obvious signs and symptoms of a concussion are too often overlooked. When a head injury occurs, it is important that one seeks the evaluation skills of a qualified medical professional to decide how serious the concussion, as well as determine when it is safe for your child to return to sports. This may include a certified athletic trainer (ATC), a physician, or a school nurse. ATCs receive in-depth training and education pertaining to the evaluation of head injuries and emergency sports-related illnesses and injuries.

When should I suspect a concussion?

Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion

What a parent/coach may observe	What an athlete may report
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache
Is confused about assignment	Nausea
Forgets plays	Balance problems or dizziness
In unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or fuzzy vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light or noise
Answers questions slowly	Feeling sluggish
Loses consciousness	Feeling groggy or foggy
Shows behavior or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events before or after hit	confusion

*Taken from Center for Disease Control (CDC) Concussion Fact Sheet

Someone who suffers a concussion can have any mix of the above noted symptoms. It is important to note that, while many symptoms occur right after injury, some might not be recognized until days or weeks later.

Of significant concern is the risk for Second Impact Syndrome (SIS). SIS occurs when someone who has sustained an initial head injury, most often a concussion, sustains a second head injury

before symptoms associated with the first have fully cleared. SIS is more common in adolescent boys and girls b/c their brains have not yet fully developed. It is documented that 50% of SIS cases result in death, while many others result in some form of permanent brain damage. In many documented cases of SIS in high schools, the injuries occurred and were not evaluated by appropriate medical professionals, i.e. an ATC. Unfortunately, the liability falls on coaches and school districts when return to play decisions are made without the presence of an ATC or physician. High school coaches are mandated to maintain basic response to emergency training; however, basic first responders are not qualified to diagnose brain injuries, as well as many other serious conditions which may occur.

If your child's school does not have access to an ATC, Millbrook Orthopedic & Sports Physical Therapy in Millbrook, NY offers free injury evaluations. Their ATC's can help you determine the severity of the head injury, as well as help you develop a plan of action and provide return to play recommendations.

The CDC recommends that, as a parent or guardian, you should tell all of your son or daughter's coaches about any recent concussion. Coaches should know if their athletes have had a recent concussion in ANY sport. The coaches may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you make them aware of it. Knowing about the concussion will allow the coach to keep your teen from activities that could result in another concussion, as well as be more cautious in the event that another head injury is suspected. Lastly, remind your athlete: It's better to miss one game than the whole season...or more.

For more information on injury prevention and management, please visit www.millbrookpt.com/helpful-information.html.