

# CONCUSSIONS IN SPORTS: *How Common Are They?*



## *CONCUSSION Defined*

Also known as a mild traumatic brain injury, a concussion is a serious form of injury affecting the brain. It is typically caused when an impact from a bump, blow, jolt, etc., causes the brain to move violently inside the skull. When this movement is severe enough, it generates changes in how the brain normally functions. Although rarely fatal, concussions are serious and can have life-altering long-term health effects.

## *The DANGEROUS DATA*



### How common are concussions?

- Concussions are very common, with **3.8 million** occurring each year in the U.S. due to sports-related injuries.
- The rate of concussion incidents is expected to **triple by 2025** as awareness increases and diagnostic tools improve.

### Frequency of sports-related concussions

- The CDC estimates **5-10% of athletes** will experience a concussion in any given sports season.
- Girls are **4 times more likely** than boys to get concussed.
- The likelihood of getting a concussion increases drastically after the first — someone who has had three concussions is **3-9 times more likely** to receive a fourth.
- Recurrent injuries such as these are linked to impaired brain function and numerous other health complications.



### Potential long-term effects from sports-related concussions

- Ongoing memory problems
- Trouble concentrating
- Issues with balance
- Cognitive impairment/dementia
- Increased risk of depression
- Changes to behavior/mood, increased aggression and agitation
- Cerebellar scarring
- Brain fluid degeneration

## *COMMON SIGNS OF A SPORTS CONCUSSION*

Signs and symptoms of a concussion may appear minor or might not present at all. Because of this, it's essential to seek medical attention **ASAP** to help mitigate long-term effects.



Blurred vision



Headache



Sensation of a strong pressure in the head



Confusion



Incoherency



Sleep disturbances



Difficulty concentrating



Loss of balance & coordination



Slurred speech



Dizziness



Memory loss



Unexplained emotional & behavioral changes



Extreme fatigue



Nausea or vomiting

## *BEST WAYS TO PREVENT A CONCUSSION & ITS LONG-TERM EFFECTS*



- Utilize techniques and maneuvers designed to minimize head contact/trauma.
- Invest in high-quality, well-fitting equipment to protect the head, neck and body.
- Replace gear, especially helmets, after signs of wear and according to expiration dates.
- Learn to recognize signs of gear disrepair and when it's time for a replacement.
- To help the healing process after a concussion occurs, it's highly recommended to:
  - Refrain from driving.
  - Avoid screens and texting.
  - Dim the lights.
  - Follow medical advice precisely.