# What Should I Know About Concussion?

*For Parents of NJFL Athletes*

**Concussion Basics:** A concussion is a brain injury that changes the way the brain works. It is often caused by a direct hit to the head, face or neck. A sudden jolt to the body or a hard fall to the ground can also send enough force to the head to cause a concussion.

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## What are the chances my child will get a concussion?

Sports concussions are very common. Between 1.1 to 1.9 million youth sustain a sports- or recreation-related concussion every year in the United States.

Research on concussions in athletes younger than high-school age is limited, but it shows that out of every 100 athletes who play a sport for a full season, between three and 13 have a concussion.

**Risk of concussion in 100 youth**


## Can I limit the chances my child will have a concussion?

You can help decrease the likelihood of having a concussion by encouraging your child to follow the coach's safety rules, use good technique, practice good sportspersonship, and wear the proper protective equipment and helmet.

## Symptoms of concussion include:

**Physical**
-Headache
-Blurred vision
-Nausea
-Fatigue
-Sensitivity to light

**Sleep**
-Sleeping more or less
-Trouble falling asleep
-Drowsiness

**Thinking**
-Trouble concentrating
-Trouble remembering
-Confusion
-Feeling forgetful

**Mood**
-More emotional
-Irritable
-Sad
-Nervous

Symptoms may appear right away or up to a day or two later. If you suspect a concussion, you should:

1. Keep your child out of practice and play
2. Seek medical attention
3. Tell your child's teachers and coaches about the concussion

## What are the potential long-term outcomes of concussion?

Most young athletes who get a concussion (80 to 90 out of 100) will recover within a month, but a few will not.

Athletes who experience persistent concussion symptoms are most likely to benefit from treatment in a center that specializes in comprehensive concussion care.

Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) is a neurological disease that can occur in people who have suffered head trauma. This is an important topic. Research on whether participation in youth sports affects a child's brain over time is still in its early stages and is inconclusive.

Currently there are no studies linking CTE and sports participation in young children; however, it still makes sense to take unnecessary head contact out of sports for athletes of all ages.

## When can my child return to sports?

The Lystedt law requires that a licensed medical professional clear an athlete before returning to sports. This healthcare provider should lead the athlete through a graduated return to play program like the one below.

Although safe return to play is the ultimate goal for athletes, returning to learn (schoolwork, homework and extracurricular activities) should be the first step.


## To learn more, visit:

- http://depts.washington.edu/shsi/education/
- www.cdc.gov/concussion
- http://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/orthopedics/services/seattle-sports-concussion-program/
- http://www.uwmedicine.org/locations/sports-concussion-program-harborview/care-providers