

NFL players with concussions now sidelined longer

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NFL players with concussions now stay away from the game significantly longer than they did in the late 1990s and early 2000s, according to research in *Sports Health*. The mean days lost with concussion increased from 1.92 days during 1996-2001 to 4.73 days during 2002-2007.

In an effort to discover whether concussion injury occurrence and treatment had changed, researchers compared those two consecutive six-year periods to determine the circumstances of the injury, the patterns of symptoms, and a player's time lost from NFL participation. Those time periods were chosen because concussion statistics were recorded by NFL teams using the same standardized form. It recorded player position, type of play, concussion signs and symptoms, [loss of consciousness](#) and medical action taken.

Researchers found that in 2002-2007 there were fewer documented concussions per NFL game overall, especially among quarterbacks and wide receivers. But there was a significant increase in concussions among tight ends. Symptoms most frequently reported included headaches, dizziness, and problems with information processing and recall.

Significantly fewer concussed players returned to the same game in 2002-2007 than in 1996-2001 and 8% fewer players returned to play in less than a week. That number jumped to 25% for those players who lost consciousness as a result of the injury.

"There are a number of possible explanations for the decrease in percentages of players returning to play immediately and returning to play on the day of the injury as well as the increased days out after (a concussion) during the recent six year period compared to the first six year period," write authors Ira R. Casson, M.D.; David C. Viano, Dr. med.; Ph.D., John W. Powell, Ph.D.; and Elliot J. Pellman, M.D. "These include the possibility of increased concussion severity, increased player willingness to report symptoms to medical staff, adoption of a more cautious conservative approach to [concussion](#) management by team medical personnel and a possible effect of changes in neuropsychological (NP) testing."

More information: The article "Twelve Years of NFL Concussion Data" in the Nov/Dec 2010 issue of Sports Health, is available free for a limited time at [sph.sagepub.com/content/early/ ... 383963.full.pdf+html](https://sph.sagepub.com/content/early/.../383963.full.pdf+html)

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