

# What do high school athletes, their parents and coaches know about concussion?

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Credit: Mayo Clinic

Most high school athletes, their parents and coaches can identify the possible effects of concussion, but only about one-third know that it is a brain injury. Those findings are outlined in a new Mayo Clinic study.

Athletes were more likely than parents and coaches to correctly identify a concussion as a brain injury.

Identifying trends and gaps in knowledge can guide help educate athletes and others about concussions, the authors say. The findings appear in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

For this study, athletes, coaches and parents from three Rochester-area high schools completed a questionnaire that assessed their concussion knowledge and history.

Earlier studies have focused on a single sport, a single subset of sports, a single population, or a single gender. The Mayo study is one of the few to examine concussion knowledge across several categories.

Of the 262 responders, 115 were athletes, 15 were coaches and 132 were parents. Fifty-five percent were female. They took the questionnaire before the 2015-2016 fall, winter and spring sports seasons. These contact and noncontact sports were included: football, soccer, volleyball, hockey, basketball, wrestling, dance, gymnastics, lacrosse, baseball and softball.

Among the findings:

- Of the three groups, coaches had the strongest knowledge about how a concussion occurs, when to remove an [athlete](#) from play, and the potential effects of repeated head injuries.
- Working in a health care setting did not appear to translate into higher knowledge scores. However, parents who did were more likely to know the long-term effects of concussion.
- Athletes were good at identifying typical symptoms of concussion but weaker on how a concussion can occur and the criteria for returning to play.

"We will use this data to guide us in our [concussion](#) education efforts," says senior author Edward Laskowski M.D., a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist and co-director of Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine in Rochester. "By targeting and tailoring the messages to coaches, parents and athletes, our hope is that it leads to a better understanding for all of this significant injury."

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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