

Be alert for concussions in young athletes

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(HealthDay)—With youth winter sports in full swing, it's important for coaches and parents to know the signs of a concussion, a sports medicine doctor says.

"Because [concussion](#) can affect thinking, the person who suffered the injury might not realize there is a problem," said Dr. Kathryn Gloyer, a primary sports medicine physician with Penn State Health in State College, Pa.

"Be aware of the symptoms of concussion so you can recognize a possible injury in yourself or others, especially [young athletes](#)," she advised.

Symptoms of a concussion can show up right away or days later and can include: dizziness, confusion, balance problems, mood or personality changes, problems thinking clearly, headache, blurry vision, nausea or vomiting, sensitivity to noise or light, and an inability to recall what happened before or after the head injury.

Seek immediate medical help if the injured person loses consciousness, has unequal pupils in the eyes, has seizures or a worsening of symptoms.

"If you suspect that someone has a concussion—especially a child who is not old enough to describe symptoms—make sure he or she sees a health care provider," Gloyer said in a Penn State news release.

For a mild concussion, treatment includes physical and mental rest.

"Give the body a break from sports and other strenuous activity, and allow the brain to rest by limiting reading and similar tasks," Gloyer said. "A person with a concussion should be able to get adequate rest; and the caretaker should monitor for worsening symptoms."

After getting the OK from a doctor, athletes should return to sports gradually, starting with light activity and working up to more intense play.

"If a player returns to activity before the body heals from concussion, a second [injury](#) could cause prolonged or worsened symptoms, or second-impact syndrome, a rare and potentially fatal condition in which another concussion causes rapid and severe brain swelling," Gloyer said.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has more on [concussions in kids](#).

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