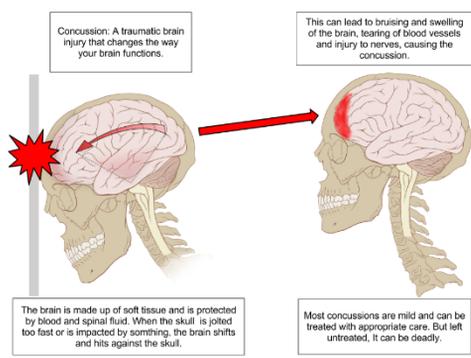




## METRIFIT FACT SHEET: CONCUSSION



### concussion

*noun*

- temporary unconsciousness or confusion and other symptoms caused by a blow on the head.  
"he was carried off the pitch with concussion"  
*synonyms:* temporary unconsciousness, temporary loss of consciousness, bang on the head; mild cranial trauma  
"Mr Kirwan suffered concussion together with shoulder and chest injuries"

The issue of concussion is one that affects a wide variety of sports across all levels, from juvenile games right up to elite athletes. Quite rightly it is a topic that has received greater attention in recent times as coaches, athletes and medical staff work to ensure that athletes get back into action as quickly as possible without compromising their health.

### WHAT IS CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. The brain moves inside the skull, and the sudden movement can cause the brain to swell.

Concussion is an injury that has been difficult to quantify but a recent report entitled [Sports-and-Recreation-Related-Concussions in US Youth](#) illustrates the scale of the problem as it estimates that that between **1.1 and 1.9 million sport-and-recreation-related concussions (SRRCs)** occur annually in US children under 18 years.

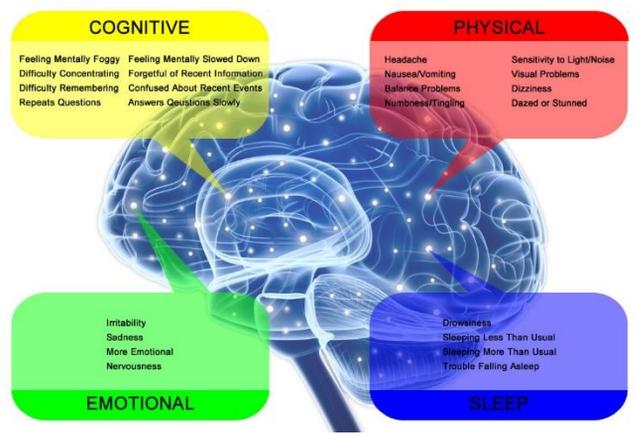
### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF CONCUSSION?

Of course it is impossible to remove the threat of concussion from contact sports and, as a result, it is vital that those involved with athletes are aware of the symptoms. Recognising concussion is the first step to dealing with the issues and as in many situations involving athletes, early intervention the key to preventing further problems.

Some of the signs include:

- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Dazed
- ✓ Confused
- ✓ Nausea
- ✓ Slowed thinking
- ✓ Tiredness
- ✓ Change in sleep
- ✓ Dizziness
- ✓ Ringing in ears
- ✓ Sensitivity to light or sounds
- ✓ Mood changes
- ✓ Blurred vision

Symptoms may appear immediately or sometime after the injury and reappear during exertion until the brain has recovered



- Remove athlete from play
- Seek medical attention
- In case of youth athlete – inform and educate parents
- Keep athlete out of play: Just like any injury, concussions take time to heal. Very often if an athlete returns to play/training while the brain is still healing there is a greater risk of having a 2<sup>nd</sup> concussion. Second impact syndrome (SIS) can occur when the brain swells rapidly after a person suffers a 2<sup>nd</sup> concussion before they symptoms of a first concussion have subsided. A second impact can occur within minutes, but also anytime during the healing process which can be days or weeks after an initial concussion.

Most organisations now have their own concussion guidelines to help protect athletes. This one from the [Irish Rugby Football Union](#) stresses:-

**STOP      INFORM      REST      RETURN**

The [English Football Association](#) concussion guidelines say:-

**If in doubt sit them out.**

- Get plenty of rest – this is key to help the brain heal
- Avoid activities that could jolt the brain
- Inform relevant people – teachers, coaches, friends
- Return slowly to activities
- Talk to a medical provider about concerns
- Seek advice if symptoms persist.

## RETURN TO PLAY/TRAINING

Athlete and players often want to return to full training and match/competition as soon as possible after suffering a concussion. The athlete and his parents/coaches need to be well informed about concussion and follow concussion guidelines and protocols.

A Graduated Return To Play (GRTP) is recommended starting with Rest & Recovery moving onto Light aerobic exercise and gradually returning to full training and finally competition. Monitoring of symptoms and cognitive function forms an integral part of GRTP.

## PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

As with many things in life, prevention is better than cure, so for those involved in sport there are a few tips to minimize the risk of concussion:-

- Wear appropriate equipment
- Learn proper techniques for particular sport
- Good coaching will minimize aggression
- Ensure facilities are up to standard

### REMEMBER:

*“Never allow an athlete to return to play until all concussion symptoms are resolved—both at rest and with exertion”*

Dr. Laurence Kleiner, MD

We want to encourage children to participate in sports so its important to keep a healthy perspective about what the risks are and educate children, parents and coaches. [HEADS UP](#) is a series of educational initiatives, developed by the [CDC](#) to help protect kids and teens by raising awareness and informing action to improve prevention, recognition, and response to concussion and other serious brain injuries. They have a wealth of free resources and customisable factsheets that can be downloaded and used to educate and inform.



## REFERENCES

[Heads Up Concussion Resources](#) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[Heads up Customisable Resources](#) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[Sports- and Recreation-Related Concussions in US Youth](#) | Seattle Sports Concussion Research Collaborative  
[Suspect a Concussion? What You Need to Know](#) | Cleveland Clinic

[A guide to concussion in Rugby Union](#)  
[The FA's concussion guidelines](#)  
[Creating a greater understanding of concussion in youth sports](#)  
[Mind your head – Concussion in Sport](#)

