

[IMAGE]

A Question of Safety: More Children Suffering Concussions

By Editorial Staff

Children reap a variety of benefits from athletics. Organized sports in particular help foster a sense of teamwork, pride in accomplishment, individual drive and commitment, and of course, a background in physical fitness that is likely to stay with them their entire lives.

There's also a risk of injury, of course, and the latest news isn't encouraging. According to a study in the September 2010 issue of *Pediatrics*, which analyzed data from emergency-room departments nationwide, approximately half of the nearly 500,000 ER visits for concussions (from 2001-2005) involving children and adolescents 8-19 years of age were sports related. Football and ice hockey topped the team sports most likely to lead to concussion, while bicycling and playground activities accounted for the most non-team concussion injuries. Even more disturbing, an estimated 40 percent of concussions were suffered by younger children - ages 8 to 13.

Concussions - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **If It Looks Like a Concussion, Play It Safe**

In professional sports, you hear about players suffering concussions on a fairly regular basis, but don't be fooled into thinking it's not a serious medical condition. The potential for long-term brain injury or even death exists, which is why players are always evaluated immediately by a team of health care professionals and sit out the rest of the game (if not multiple games). If your child experiences any of these symptoms following a head injury, play it safe and visit a doctor:

- Loss of consciousness
- Confusion or amnesia
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Ringing in the ears
- Slurred speech
- Unusual fatigue

Be familiar with the warning signs that indicate your child may have suffered a concussion, and talk to your doctor about steps you can take to reduce your child's injury risk.

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