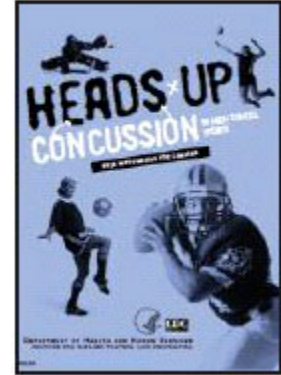
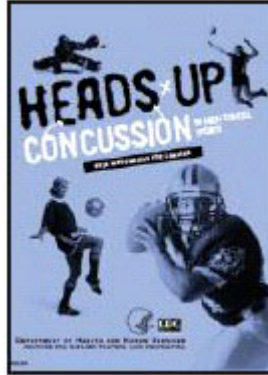
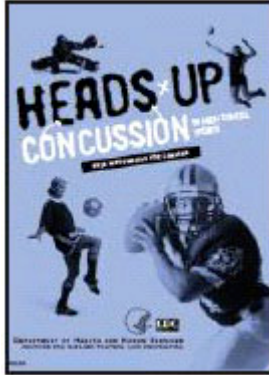




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*Head injuries have been called the “silent epidemic” – many people do not know how serious they can be*



**What Is A Concussion?** Concussions are injuries that occur from both mild and severe blows to the head. Unfortunately contact sports and some recreational sports carry risks for serious head injury. While it may seem obvious, small repetitive brain injuries can cause long-term damage. Head injuries can occur during any sport. However, the four most common sports during which head injuries occur are cycling, football, baseball/softball and basketball.

**What Are Concussion Symptoms?** Symptoms may include altered balance or coordination, confusion, disorientation, dizziness, fatigue, headache, memory loss, nausea/vomiting, ringing in the ears, and personality changes. Depression is one of the many symptoms experienced by athletes following a concussion. Some research has even shown a link between depression in later life and head trauma in childhood.

**When Should An Athlete Return to Play?** Deciding when an athlete should safely return to sports after a concussion is difficult. There are a number of return-to-play guidelines that can be useful. It should be noted, however, that although head injuries may appear to be mild, there may be serious, long-term effects, especially with repeated injuries. *Whenever there is a blow to the head, the athlete should stop the activity and seek medical attention. Even a mild bump on the head can become serious.*

### **What Can Be Done to Prevent Head Injuries?**

- Buy and use helmets or protective head gear that fit properly
- Supervise younger children - do not let them use playgrounds with hard surfaces
- Follow all rules and warning signs at water parks, swimming pools, and public beaches
- Obey all traffic signals and be aware of drivers when cycling or skateboarding
- Perform regular safety checks of sports fields, playgrounds and equipment
- Discard and replace damaged sporting equipment and protective gear