



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *Keep Your Head in the Game*

*Self-Reported Concussions from Playing a Sport or Being Physically Active Among High School Students—United States, 2017*

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*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser, filling in for your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling.

High school sports provide both exercise and memories, but there are risks involved. In 2017, approximately one in six high school students reported a sports- or physical activity-related concussion.

Dr. Lara DePadilla is with CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of preventing, recognizing, and managing concussions. Welcome to the show, Lara.

[Dr. Lara DePadilla] Thanks.

[Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser] Lara, let's start with a definition. What *is* a concussion?

[Dr. Lara DePadilla] A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and the brain to move rapidly back and forth.

[Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser] What are the most common signs and symptoms of a concussion?

[Dr. Lara DePadilla] One of the most common symptoms of concussion is headache. Other symptoms are dizziness and trouble concentrating. But one point I want to make is that each concussion is unique and how a person feels can differ as well. For most people, concussion symptoms will appear soon after the injury, but for others, symptoms might not be noticeable until a person starts to do their usual activities. So, an example might be a young person feels okay at first but then they notice that they have more trouble than usual concentrating at school. So that's why it's important to keep a healthcare provider in the loop during recovery.

[Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser] So, if someone has a concussion, how is that treated?

[Dr. Lara DePadilla] Well, as I've kind of alluded to, there is no one size fits all approach to treating concussion. Instead, healthcare providers can create a tailored return to activity plan that makes sense with a person's individual symptoms. This could include short-term changes to a person's daily activities, such as wearing sunglasses if they're having light sensitivity, or maybe allowing for breaks at school if they're feeling more slowed down than usual. But as they feel

better, they can start to remove these changes and use their symptoms as a guide for how quickly to return to normal activities.

[Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser] That's really good information. What should a parent do if they suspect their child has sustained a concussion?

[Dr. Lara DePadilla] If a parent thinks their child has had a concussion, they should make sure their child is checked by their healthcare provider. If the concussion happens while playing sports, parents should remove the child from play and keep the child out of play the day of the injury. And really, only a healthcare provider should give permission for a child to return to sports after concussion. This is because if a child returns to sports too soon, before the brain is healed, it can slow their recovery process and it can create more risk for having a repeat concussion.

[Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser] What are some ways to decrease the chances of getting a concussion?

[Dr. DePadilla] Well, it's important for young athletes to follow the rules of fair play and safety for their particular sport, and if they do experience a concussion to report it to an adult as soon as possible. Other things to think about are for motor vehicle crashes; it's really important to wear a seat belt for every trip, no matter how short. And in the context of riding bikes, it's important to have a bike helmet that fits well, is worn correctly, and is in good condition.

[Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser] Lara, if listeners want more information, where can they go?

[Dr. DePadilla] We have a bunch of great resources on our website. We have handouts, free smart phone apps, and online trainings for coaches and healthcare providers and these can be found at [cdc.gov/headsup](http://cdc.gov/headsup). That is H-E-A-D-S-U-P.

[Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser] Thanks, Lara. I've been talking today with Dr. Lara DePadilla about the importance of preventing, recognizing, and managing concussions.

**Healthcare** providers, coaches, trainers, and parents should be aware of the symptoms of a concussion and how to treat them. While concussions can't always be prevented, they can be managed in a way that decreases the chances of long-term health problems.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Jeffrey Nemhauser for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.