

More than a bump on the old noggin

You're hearing more about sports-related concussions. Why? Because there are simply more of them. Like 3 million each year, says the CDC.

Does anyone suspected of having a concussion need a CT or MRI scan right away? Dr. Howard Derman, director of the Methodist Concussion Center in Houston, explains. While there is damage to the brain cells in a concussion, the damage is at a microscopic level and cannot be seen on MRI or CT scans. The injured brain looks normal on these tests, even though it has been seriously injured. Even if a CT scan or MRI shows you're "okay," your doctor should also perform a physical exam.

The signs and symptoms of concussion can appear immediately after the injury or may not appear until days after. Some of the many apparent signs to note are these:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Answers questions slowly
- Has nausea or vomiting
- Feels sensitivity to light or noise
- Cannot recall events prior to the hit or fall

With a concussion, athletes need to be medically cleared to return to activity. The brain is bruised. It needs time to heal.

