

HEADS UP



1. Use equipment to protect your head: Break out that helmet for hockey, or put on padded headgear for boxing.
2. Be aware of your surroundings: Keep an eye out for flying elbows, other people, moving or stationary objects and anything else that could hurt your head.
3. Always wear proper footwear with good traction.
4. Play in well-lit areas and on surfaces appropriate for your activity.

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Keep Your Head in the Game: Recognize Sports-Related Brain Injury

The military community is active and fit.

You enjoy a variety of sports — mixed martial arts, basketball with your buddies and more — and you play hard. But the best of the best also play smart.

To stay in the game, you need to know how to recognize a brain injury. **The majority of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) in the military are diagnosed in noncombat settings** — on the basketball court or the playing field, for example. In the event that you or a teammate sustains a brain injury during a game, it's vital to know the signs and symptoms and to get help right away.

What is a TBI?

A TBI is a blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the function of the brain. Brain injuries can be classified as mild — a concussion — or moderate to severe. Simply keeping safe in your activities can prevent TBI.

Look out for these signs and symptoms of brain injury:

If an incident occurs, in addition to seeking medical attention for immediate injuries and symptoms, be alert to any signs or symptoms of concussions or TBI in the hours and days after the incident.

- Headache or sensation of pressure in the head
- Loss of, or alteration of, consciousness
- Confusion
- Dizziness, feeling off-balance, or the sensation of spinning
- Delayed response to questions
- Ringing in the ears
- Trouble concentrating
- Continued or persistent memory loss

Get help and recover:

- Seek out professional medical evaluation and assistance right away.
- Rest and limit your activity for as long as your doctor advises.
- Return to normal activity once cleared by a doctor.
- Stop and get checked out if symptoms return.

While moderate and severe TBIs may be easily recognized and require immediate medical attention, concussions — the most common form of TBI in the military — can be more difficult to detect.



A Head for the Future, an initiative of the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, raises awareness of traumatic brain injury and educates the military community about the importance of preventing brain injury in noncombat situations.

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