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Computer Program Helps Concussion Sufferers

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On the HealthWatch, you've heard the sportscasters say it, "how that was a real "bell-ringer."

They're talking about a bad hit some athlete took.

Repeated concussions can cause permanent brain damage and worse.

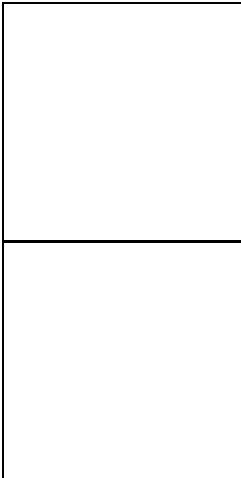
But kids who are passionate about their contact sports don't even want to tell their parents if they think they've had a concussion because they still want to play the game.

But parents should know there are new guidelines to describe concussions and a new way to know if your kid can go back in the game.

Former Flyers captain Keith Primeau retired from hockey last week because of concussions.

And right up there with the big guys was 18 -year-old Mikyla Croul in her sophomore year of high school.

"That year I got about seven concussions," Croul said, who didn't think they were serious.



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Contact sports are out for Mikyla now. But soccer used to be her addiction, so she never told anyone when she got a concussion. "If the kid gets one concussion and then another, each concussion can take them down a little more," said Dr. Robert Franks of the Cooper Bone and Joint Institute. "It also can make them more susceptible to lesser impacts."

That's why Franks is excited about this new computer program that measure the thinking abilities of young athletes like their visual and verbal memories.

"Once you get a baseline score on an athlete, they can be tested again after a concussion to more clearly determine who can safely go back in the game," said Franks.

"Second impact syndrome is basically a second hit or a second concussive injury when you haven't recovered from the first. It can often be fatal."

Mikyla's learned to exercise a new way now and says this computer program helped doctors see she actually needed professional help to learn how to think again.

Remember, a concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury. There's been a force to the chest, neck or head that radiates to the head and causes an injury to the brain.

You don't have to lose consciousness or have amnesia. If you want to find out how your school can participate in this computer program at Cooper, go to the following Web site: www.bianj.org or call 1-800-8-COOPER.

Your school has to pay half the cost and a grant may pay the rest.

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