

Concussion Test: ImPACT

January 5 - One in every 10 high school athletes will have a concussion -- and the more they have, the worse it gets.

"The effects of each ensuing concussion can be more and more damaging," Mark Lovell, Ph.D., a neurophysiologist at University of Pittsburgh, tells Ivanhoe.

Most athletes are fiercely competitive and aren't happy sitting on the sidelines. Steelers' quarterback Ben Roethlisberger has already suffered two concussions this year but quickly bounced back on the field, and younger athletes aren't much different -- most will shrug off symptoms just to get back in the game.

Dr. Lovell says, "When they go back in too soon, we can see very negative effects on brain function if they are hit again." He developed a computer test to diagnose concussions. Among the exercises, athletes memorize a series of words and designs and recall them later.

Goalie Megan Capozzi recently took a hit that left her stumbling but didn't stop her from playing. "I was really off-balance, but I could feel where I got hit pretty bad," she says. And the next day, she knew something was wrong.

"I could not focus on anything. I just stared off a lot," Capozzi says, "and I felt really light-headed." She took the ImPACT test, which diagnosed her concussion. Now, she'll sit out for at least two weeks.

Dr. Lovell says the ImPACT concussion management system really gives the athlete a way of protecting themselves from further injury. About 1,500 high schools, colleges and professional sports teams across the country use the test, which is called ImPACT. It costs schools between \$300 and \$400 a year.

If you would like more information, please contact:

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