

# Heads Up

By Shaleek Wilson



**Dr. Sharief Taraman**  
CHOC Neurology Specialist

**Dr. Taraman** is a pediatric neurologist and assistant professor at University of California, Irvine. He specializes in concussion management.

Dr. Taraman's philosophy of care: "I love pediatrics. My daughter was born my first day of medical school. I try to help parents understand the balance of the risks and benefits of participating in sports."

**EDUCATION:**

Wayne State University School of Medicine  
University of Michigan (B.S., Biochemistry)

**BOARD CERTIFICATIONS:**

Neurology with special qualifications  
in child neurology

## UNDERSTANDING CONCUSSIONS

"The word concussion comes from the Latin word to shake violently. It's a force that causes a temporary injury to the brain or spinal cord," says Dr. Taraman. "A lot of times, people may hit their head and don't realize it was a concussion."

**Signs of concussion may include:**

- » Forgetfulness
- » Confusion
- » Loss of consciousness

## PLAY IT SAFE

If a child is injured during a sports practice, parents and coaches should make sure the young athlete stops playing. "The child needs to avoid any further hits, jolts, shakes or bumps to the head or spine," says Dr. Taraman. "Make sure they don't go back [in the game] and get a second hit. Not only is it unsafe, it's going to make the recovery take longer and affect the child."



## SIDELINE TIME

"The vast majority of concussions will resolve themselves and heal relatively well," says Dr. Taraman. After being diagnosed, parents should follow the Graduated Return to Learn & Play Guidelines advised by their doctor. This includes "slowly ramping up from a total rest period of 24 to 48 hours not visiting social media, texting, etc so the brain can heal," says Dr. Taraman.

**The guidelines include five stages of activity levels, such as:**

- » No physical activity
- » Sports-specific exercise
- » Non-contact training drills



**24-48** HOURS CHILDREN S  
TYPICALLY REST AFT  
ON-FIELD HEAD INJ

**300,000**

NUMBER OF SPORTS-RELATED  
CONCUSSIONS THAT OCCUR  
EVERY YEAR IN THE U.S.

**40%** OF SPORTS-RELATED  
CONCUSSIONS INVOLVING  
CHILDREN BETWEEN THE  
AGES OF 8 AND 13



Experts in: **Concussions** Visit [choc.org/health](http://choc.org/health) to download fast facts on identifying a possible concussion.



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