

Crash and Burn: The Dangers of Winter Mountain Sports

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With the 2010 Winter Olympic Games being held in Vancouver, Canada, all eyes have turned to the U.S. snowboarding team. During a training session in Park City, Utah in late December, Kevin Pearce miscalculated a twisting double back flip. He lost consciousness from a blow above the eye against the wall of an icy half pipe. Kevin was rushed to the University of Utah hospital where he was evaluated and treated under the watchful eye of attending physicians and staff.

So what went wrong? Accidents happen at all levels of athletics regardless of protective gear or skill level. Kevin Pearce is a highly skilled athlete who has performed this trick many times before successfully. However, since the blow was sustained to the eye just below the reach of his helmet the impact had a greater effect. Mountain winter sports pose a large danger of concussions due to the conditions and nature of the sport. Most concussions are preventable and treatable.

If your child is involved in a winter sport please take the proper precautions to ensure your child's safety. The Center for Injury Research and Policy created a helpful safety [fact sheet for skiers and snowboarders](#).

Below is a list of suggestions to help lower the risk of injury:

- A helmet designated for skiing or snowboarding should be worn at all times.
- Protect your skin and eyes from the sun and wind. Apply sunscreen and wear ski goggles.
- Protect yourself from the elements. Layer up and wear a hat or headband.
- Proper supervision and training; Do not ski or snowboard alone
- Make sure your boots and bindings fit properly
- Follow all trail rules.
- Stay on the designated trails.
- Ski or snowboard trails that match your skill level.
- Make sure you know how to load/unload the ski lift or tow rope before you get on.

Nonetheless, just like Kevin, concussions still occur. Nationwide Children's Sports Medicine is the only pediatric hospital in the Columbus area that offers highly specialized services for the diagnosis and treatment of concussions. The Concussion Clinic utilizes the expertise of pediatric Sports Medicine specialists and [Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation](#) specialists, along with neurologists, neurosurgeons, radiologists, neuropsychologists and athletic trainers to best manage pediatric concussions. Sports Medicine uses computer based Neurocognitive testing as a valuable diagnostic tool. A more complete listing of signs and symptoms of a concussion are located in the Concussion Brochure at [NationwideChildrens.org\SportsMedicine](http://NationwideChildrens.org/SportsMedicine). If you suspect your child has sustained a head injury please call (614) 355-6000 to schedule a concussion appointment.