

New Research on CTE:

What Football Players & Families Should Know

New Mass General Brigham, Boston University, Concussion & CTE Foundation Study

Findings: at least 1 in 4 former NFL players who died between 2016 and 2021 had CTE

This is an important finding about CTE among former NFL players with extensive exposure to repetitive head impacts. But it does not tell a living player whether they have CTE or what their individual risk may be.

The most important thing to know

Having played tackle football at any point in your life does not mean you have CTE. Having symptoms does not mean CTE is causing them.

We are still learning about CTE. We take your concerns seriously, and we are here to support you.

What we know about CTE

CTE cannot currently be definitively diagnosed during life. Changes in memory, thinking, mood, behavior, sleep, balance, or other concerns can have many possible causes. Common symptoms like headaches do not appear to be connected to CTE.

Some symptoms may be related to previous brain injury or repetitive head impacts. Others may be related to sleep, mental health, hormonal or nutritional issues, other medical or neurological conditions, or normal aging. Some of these causes and symptoms may be treatable or manageable with the right help.

If you have concerns about CTE

The Concussion & CTE Foundation HelpLine team is standing by to support you. We can help you find the best healthcare provider to support your symptoms, share educational resources, and offer support groups for you or your family members.

If concerns about CTE are making you feel hopeless or unsafe, please reach out for support. Call or text **988** for immediate help.



ConcussionAndCTE.org/Helpline

4 Steps You Can Take Now

1

Talk with a healthcare professional

Depending on your age, symptoms, and history of head impacts, the right provider may be a concussion/TBI specialist, neurologist, neuropsychologist, mental health provider, or memory and aging specialist. These professionals can evaluate your symptoms, consider other possible causes, and recommend next steps.

Bring information about:

- Your football and repetitive head impact history
- Previous concussions or brain injuries
- Your current symptoms and when they began
- Previous medical evaluations or treatments

2

Monitor and share changes affecting daily life

Keep track of and share with your healthcare provider specific concerns with memory, thinking, mood, behavior, sleep, balance, headaches, or other symptoms.

Note:

- When the changes began
- Whether they are getting better, worse, or staying the same
- How they affect work, relationships, or everyday activities

3

Focus on treating your symptoms

Ask your healthcare team about evidence-based treatments for the symptoms affecting you.

Healthy daily habits can also support brain health and overall well-being:

- Stay physically active in ways that are appropriate for you
- Prioritize consistent, quality sleep
- Eat a balanced, heart-healthy diet
- Stay connected with family, friends, and your community
- Keep your mind active through meaningful activities

4

Help advance CTE research

You can help advance CTE research by joining the [**Concussion & CTE Foundation Research Registry**](#). You can learn about opportunities to participate in research, pledge your brain for research, or both.

We still have a lot to learn about CTE, and there are meaningful ways to help find better answers now. We currently prioritize longitudinal clinical research, where your time and participation can help researchers improve our understanding of CTE and work toward better care for players and families. **There is help available today and reasons to be hopeful about the answers research can provide in the future.**