

CONCUSSION

INFORMATION FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES & PARENTS/LEGAL CUSTODIANS

What is a concussion? A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head. It results in your brain not working as it should. It may or may not cause you to black out or pass out. It can happen to you from a fall, a hit to the head, or a hit to the body that causes your head and your brain to move quickly back and forth.

How do I know if I have a concussion? There are many signs and symptoms that you may have following a concussion. A concussion can affect your thinking, the way your body feels, your mood, or your sleep. Here is what to look for:

Thinking/Remembering	Physical	Emotional/Mood	Sleep
Difficulty thinking clearly	Fuzzy or blurry vision Feeling sick to your stomach/queasy	Irritability-things bother you more easily Sadness Being more moody Feeling nervous or worried Crying more	Sleeping more than usual Sleeping less than usual Trouble falling asleep Feeling tired
Taking longer to figure things out	Vomiting/throwing up		
Difficulty concentrating	Dizziness		
Difficulty remembering new information	Balance problems Sensitivity to noise or light		

Table is adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/>)

What should I do if I think I have a concussion? If you are having any of the signs or symptoms listed above, you should tell your parents, coach, athletic trainer or school nurse so they can get you the help you need. If a parent notices these symptoms, they should inform the school nurse or athletic trainer.

When should I be particularly concerned? If you have a headache that gets worse over time, you are unable to control your body, you throw up repeatedly or feel more and more sick to your stomach, or your words are coming out funny/slurred, you should let an adult like your parent or coach or teacher know right away, so they can get you the help you need before things get any worse.

What are some of the problems that may affect me after a concussion? You may have trouble in some of your classes at school or even with activities at home. If you continue to play or return to play too early with a concussion, you may have long term trouble remembering things or paying attention, headaches may last a long time, or personality changes can occur. Once you have a concussion, you are more likely to have another concussion.

How do I know when it's ok to return to physical activity and my sport after a concussion? After telling your coach, your parents, and any medical personnel around that you think you have a concussion, you will probably be seen by a doctor trained in helping people with concussions. Your school and your parents can help you decide who is best to treat you and help to make the decision on when you should return to activity/play or practice. Your school will have a policy in place for how to treat concussions. You should not return to play or practice on the same day as your suspected concussion.

You should not have any symptoms at rest or during/after activity when you return to play, as this is a sign your brain has not recovered from the injury.

Return to Play Progression for Concussions

Once symptom free

- After 12 hours of being symptom free
 - The basic neurological exam must be normal
 - A medical doctor must give clearance to begin the progression
- Progression
 - Day 1 Symptom Free
 - Aerobic exercise (stationary bike for 20 minutes)
 - Day 2 Symptom Free
 - Sport specific non-sprinting drills
 - Day 3 Symptom Free
 - Sport specific sprinting drills
 - Day 4 Symptom Free
 - Regular practice
 - Day 5 Symptom Free
 - Game play

Things to remember:

- No concussion is the same. This progression may not occur in this exact order.
- There is no return to play on the day a concussion is sustained.
- There must be at least a 48 hour wait period before the 12 hours of symptom free
- The ImPact test must be retaken
 - This is a computer based test that evaluates neurocognitive ability pre and post-concussion
- If any symptoms reoccur during any phase of the next few days, the progression jumps backwards to the last phase of the progression
- Each step takes 24 hours
- Persistent recurrent symptoms require returning to complete rest and reevaluation by physician
- The entire protocol will take a minimum of 7 days
- The athlete must see a doctor prior to returning to play