

CONCUSSION GUIDE FOR ATHLETES

What is a concussion?

Concussion is the most common head injury in sports. Most concussions are considered a functional brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Signs and symptoms of a concussion vary considerably and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Most athletes with concussions do not suffer loss of consciousness. There is no such thing as a minor concussion. Even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious enough to cause missed time from sport participation. Once a player has a concussion they may be at higher risk for another. The greatest risk is when the athlete has not recovered from the previous concussion, and recent evidence shows younger athletes recover slower.

What should I do?

Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be removed from play, and told to seek medical evaluation.

Signs to watch for:

Problems could arise over the first 24-48 hours. You should not be left alone and must go to a hospital emergency room at once if you or others around you notice:

- Have a headache that gets worse
- Are very drowsy or can't be woken up
- Can't recognize people or places
- Vomiting
- Behave unusually or seem confused; are very irritable
- Have weak or numb arms or legs
- Have seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably)
- Are unsteady on your feet; have slurred speech

What can I expect?

Concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment that resolves spontaneously over time. You can expect that you will be told to rest until you are fully recovered (that means resting your body and your mind). Then, your health care provider will likely advise that you go through a gradual increase in exercise over several days (or longer) before returning to sport.

RETURN TO PLAY

Athletes should not be returned to play the same day of injury.

Progressive return to activity should be supervised by an appropriate health care provider and the athlete should remain completely symptom free throughout the process. As an example:

1. Rest until asymptomatic (physical and mental rest)
2. Light aerobic exercise (e.g stationary cycle)
3. Sport-specific training
4. Non-contact training drills (start light resistance training)
5. Full contact training after medical clearance
6. Return to competition (game play)

Medical clearance should be given before return to play.

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____

School: _____

Date of Injury: _____

Number of times diagnosed with a Concussion (excluding current injury): _____

Number of hours of sleep last night: _____

Current Medications: _____

Sport Concussion Assessment Tool

(Adapted from Consensus Statement of the Third
International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Zurich 2008)

How do you feel? You should score yourself on the following symptoms, *based on how you feel now*.

Post Concussion Symptom Scale

(Circle number that applies)

	None			Moderate			Severe	
Headache	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
“Pressure in head”	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Neck Pain	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Balance problems	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Nausea or vomiting	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Blurred vision	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Dizziness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
“Don’t feel right”	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Feeling “dinged” or “dazed”	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Confusion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Feeling slowed down	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Feeling like “in a fog”	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Drowsiness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Fatigue or low energy	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
More emotional than usual	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Irritability	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Difficulty concentrating	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Difficulty remembering	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sadness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Nervous or anxious	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Trouble falling asleep	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sleeping more than usual	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sensitivity to light	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sensitivity to noise	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Other: _____	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	

MD/PA/NP/ATC Initials: _____