

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury – or TBI – caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head & brain to move quickly back & forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain & sometimes stretching & damaging the brain cells.

WHAT ARE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION?

Signs & Symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If an athlete reports one or more symptoms of concussion after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, s/he should be kept out of play the day of the injury. The athlete should only return to play with the permission from a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussions.

Athlete Reported Symptoms:

- Headache or “Pressure” in the Head
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Dizziness or Balance Problems
- Blurry or Double Vision
- Sensitivity to Light
- Sensitivity to Noise
- Feeling Sluggish, Hazy, Foggy or Groggy
- Concentration or Memory Problems
- Confusion
- Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

**“IT’S
BETTER TO
MISS ONE
GAME
THAN THE
WHOLE
SEASON”**

Coach Observed Signs:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

CONCUSSION DANGER SIGNS

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (even briefly should be taken seriously)

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR ATHLETE HAS A CONCUSSION?

1. If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, remove the athlete from play and seek medical attention. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury & until a health care professional experienced in the evaluating for concussion says s/he is symptom-free and it’s OK to return to play.
2. Rest is key to helping an athlete recover from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on a computer, and playing video games, may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional.
3. Remember: Concussions affect people differently. While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

WHY SHOULD AN ATHLETE REPORT THEIR SYMPTOMS?

If an athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. While an athlete’s brain is still healing, s/he is much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover. In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to their brain. They can even be fatal.