

Concussion Fact Sheet for Athletes

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal functioning of the brain (changes how the cells in the brain normally work).

What causes a concussion?

A concussion can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Basically, any force that is transmitted to the head causing the brain to literally bounce around or twist within the skull can result in a concussion. Medical research indicates adolescents are more susceptible to concussions than adults and take longer to recover.

How do you know if someone has a concussion?

Less than 10% of concussions result in the loss of consciousness, making the injury difficult to diagnose, especially during the excitement of live competition. It is important to note that a concussion can happen to anyone in any sport or athletic activity. There are four areas of function that are affected by a concussion:

1. Physical signs/symptoms
2. Cognitive
3. Emotional
4. Sleep disruption

What should you do if you think you or a teammate has a concussion?

Tell your coaches or parents immediately. You or a teammate with a head injury or suspected concussion should be removed from play and practice until evaluated by a health care provider. Players who are removed from any youth athletic event because of a suspected head injury or concussion must receive written consent to return to play/practice.

What should you do if your health care provider determines you have a concussion?

You should make sure to get plenty of rest and spend time getting well. Tell your teachers. Concussions can hinder your performance in class. You may need to take a few days off of school to recuperate. Once you return you may need to take breaks throughout the day, have more time to take tests or to finish assignments, refrain from physical activity (i.e. P.E. and recess), hold off on attending extracurricular activities, reduce time spent on activities that require heavy concentration such as reading and writing and avoid electronics.



Concussion Symptoms:

How to tell if someone has a concussion:

- Acting dazed, stunned or confused
- Forgetful, i.e. forgetting sports plays for your team's athletic activity
- Unusually clumsy
- Answers questions slowly or repeats them
- Can't recall events prior to or after the head injury
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes

How to tell if **YOU** have a concussion:

Physical Symptoms:

- Headache or "pressure" feeling, dizziness, or balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision, sensitivity to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Just don't "feel right"

Cognitive Symptoms:

- Difficulty thinking clearly, concentrating or remembering
- Feeling slow, sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy

Emotional Symptoms:

- Irritable
- Sad
- Nervous
- More or less emotional than usual
- Function: Sleep disruption
- Change in normal sleep pattern

Remember:
When in doubt, sit them out.