



Concussion Fact Sheet for WCRIS Coaches

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 a player 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.

Two signs to watch for in your athletes:

1. A powerful blow to the head OR the body that produces a jerking movement of the head.
2. Any change in the athlete's behavior, especially related to cognitive function, emotional state, and physical symptoms.

What should you do if you think a player has a concussion?

As an athletic coach it is your responsibility to remove any player that shows signs of a head injury or concussion. Follow the action plan below to be sure you are in line with the law:

1. Any student athlete with a head injury or suspected concussion should be removed from play and practice until evaluated by a health care provider. Do not attempt to judge the severity of an injury yourself.
2. Do not allow a student athlete with a suspected head injury or concussion to be alone at any time, including the locker room or vehicle used to transport the team. Do not allow him/her to drive home.
3. Tell the parent(s)/guardian(s) about a suspected concussion. They will need to know that their child needs to be seen by a health care provider before returning to play.
4. 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.

Concussion Symptoms:

Symptoms observed by coaches and staff:

- Acting dazed, stunned or confused
- Forgetful, i.e. forgetting sports plays for the 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

Symptoms described by your player:

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 doesn'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
- Drowsy or has trouble falling asleep

Remember:
When in doubt, sit them out.