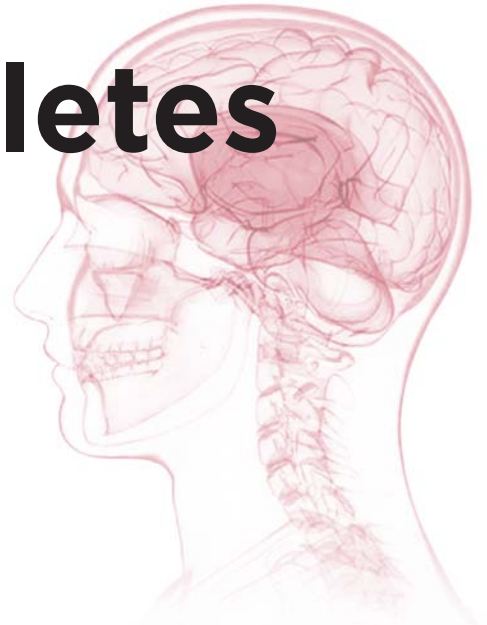




Concussion Information for Athletes



Concussions are traumatic brain injuries that must be taken seriously. Concussions can occur in any sport or recreational activity. That is why all coaches, parents, and athletes need to learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs. Below you will find information detailing concussion recognition, management and prevention. For more information please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Concussion in Sports website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>

What is a concussion? A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head.
- Can change the way your brain normally works.
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport.
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged."

Signs and Symptoms²

Signs Observed by Parents & Coaches

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

Athlete's Symptoms

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports", A Fact Sheet for Athletes. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/athletes_Eng.pdf.

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports", A Fact Sheet for Coaches. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf.

Riddell[®] for Athletes

CDC's Concussion Management Action Plan

What should you do if you think you have a concussion?

1) Tell your coaches and your parents.

Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.

2) Get a medical check-up.

A doctor or health care professional can tell if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.

3) Give yourself time to get better.

If you have a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause more damage to your brain. It is important to rest and not return to play until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

Getting Better

Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal.

Ignoring symptoms and trying to “tough it out” often makes symptoms worse. Be patient because healing takes time. Only when your symptoms have reduced significantly, in consultation with your doctor, should you slowly and gradually return to your daily activities, such as work or school. If your symptoms come back or you get new symptoms as you become more active, this is a sign that you are pushing yourself too hard. Stop these activities and take more time to rest and recover. As the days go by, you can expect to gradually feel better.

Tips to help you get better:

- 🛌 Get plenty of sleep at night, and rest during the day.
- 🚫 Avoid activities that are physically demanding (e.g., sports, heavy house-cleaning, working-out) or require a lot of concentration (e.g., sustained computer use, video games).
- 🚗 Ask your doctor when you can safely drive a car, ride a bike, or operate heavy equipment.
- 🚫 Do not drink alcohol. Alcohol and other drugs may slow your recovery and put athletes at risk of further injury.



**There are many people
who can help you and your family**

Recover
from a concussion.

You do not have to do it alone. Keep talking with your doctor, family members, and loved ones about how you are feeling, both physically and emotionally. If you do not think you are getting better, tell your doctor.⁴

How Can I Prevent a Concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- 🏈 Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- 🏈 Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- 🏈 Use the proper sports equipment including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards).
- 🏈 In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
 - The right equipment for the game, position, and activity
 - Worn correctly and fit well
 - Used every time you play⁵

⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Facts about Concussion and Brain Injury." Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Fact_Sheet_ConcussTBI-a.pdf.

⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports", A Fact Sheet for Athletes. Available at: http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/athletes_Eng.pdf.