

PARENT & ATHLETE CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET



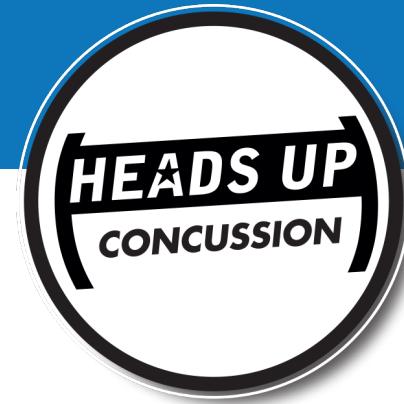
WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION?

Signs and 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 permission from a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.



SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE:

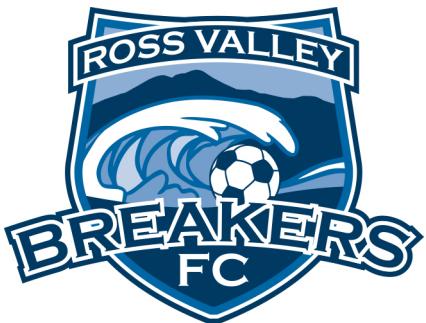
- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

DID YOU KNOW?

- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- Athletes who have, at any point in their lives, had a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion.
- Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an 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



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

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 a brief loss of consciousness 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. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in 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 the 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.

STUDENT-ATHLETE NAME PRINTED

STUDENT-ATHLETE NAME SIGNED

DATE

PARENT OR GUARDIAN NAME PRINTED

PARENT OR GUARDIAN NAME SIGNED

DATE

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Hospital:



What to expect after a concussion

A part of CDC's "Heads Up" Series

INFORMATION FOR ADULTS

You have been examined for a head injury and possible concussion.

- You did not have a CT scan of your brain because it was determined that it was not needed at this time.
- You had a CT scan of your brain and no injury was identified.

It is safe for you to go home, but you may still have had an injury to your brain or may experience symptoms. We suggest that you limit certain activities.

Take time off from work or school for _____ days or until you and your health care professional think you are able to return to your usual routine.

Further instructions from your health care professional:

When should I return to the hospital emergency department?

Sometimes serious problems develop after a head injury. Return immediately to the emergency department if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Repeated vomiting
- Headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Loss of consciousness or unable to stay awake during times you would normally be awake
- Getting more confused, restless, or agitated
- Convulsions or seizures
- Difficulty walking or difficulty with balance
- Weakness or numbness
- Difficulty with your vision

Most of all, if you have any symptom that concerns you, your family members, or friends, **don't delay, see a doctor right away.**

Q&A. Some questions and answers about brain injuries

Q. What is a concussion?

A. A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI). It is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Some of the ways you can get a concussion are when you hit your head during a fall, car crash, or sports injury. Health care professionals sometime refer to concussions as "mild" brain injuries because they are usually not life-threatening. Even so, their effects can be serious.



Q. What should I expect once I'm home from the hospital?

A. Most people with a concussion recover quickly and fully. During recovery, it is important to know that many people have a range of symptoms. Some symptoms may appear right away, while others may not be noticed for hours or even days after the injury. You may not realize you have problems until you try to do your usual activities again.

Below is a list of some of the symptoms you may have:

 Thinking/ Remembering	Difficulty thinking clearly	Feeling slowed down	Difficulty concentrating	Difficulty remembering new information
 Physical	Headache	Nausea or vomiting (early on)	Sensitivity to noise or light	Feeling tired, having no energy
 Emotional/ Mood	Fuzzy or blurry vision	Dizziness	Balance problems	
 Sleep	Irritability	Sadness	More emotional	Nervousness or anxiety
	Sleeping more than usual	Sleeping less than usual	Trouble falling asleep	

These “postconcussive” symptoms can be part of the normal healing process and are generally not signs of permanent damage or serious health problems. Most symptoms go away over time without any treatment.

It is easy to become upset or afraid if you don't know what to expect or if you are having problems. Keep talking with your doctor and others about how you are feeling. Tell your health care professional if you do not think you are getting better.

Q. What can I do to feel better?

- A. Getting plenty of rest and sleep helps the brain to heal. Do not try to do too much too fast. As you start to feel better, you can slowly and gradually return to your usual routine. Here are some other tips to help you get better:
- Avoid activities that are physically demanding (e.g., sports, heavy housecleaning, exercising) or require a lot of thinking or concentration (e.g., working on the computer, playing video games). Ignoring your symptoms and “toughing it out” often makes symptoms worse.
 - Ask your health care professional when you can safely drive a car, ride a bike, or operate heavy equipment.
 - Do not drink alcohol.

Q. What if I don't feel better after a week?

- A. If you do not feel back to normal within one week, see a health care professional who has experience treating brain injuries.

Q. Should I tell my work about my injury?

- A. If your injury was work-related, make sure you report it right away to your employer and your workers' compensation office.

Q. When can I return to sports and recreational activities?

- A. Do not return to sports and recreational activities before talking to your health care professional. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain has fully healed can be very dangerous and may slow your recovery or increase the chance for long-term problems.

Q. How can I avoid a concussion in the future?

- A. There are many ways to minimize the risk of a concussion and other injuries:
- Wear a seat belt and use a safety seat for children.
 - Wear a helmet that fits properly when biking, riding a motorcycle, skating, skiing, horseback riding, or playing contact sports.
 - Prevent falls in the home by:
 - Using grab bars in the bathroom and handrails by stairs.
 - Placing non-slip mats in the bathtub and on floors.
 - Removing trip hazards in the house.
 - Improving lighting.
 - Installing safety gates by stairs and safety guards by windows to protect young children in your home.

For more information about concussion, please visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

This fact sheet is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) “Heads Up” series of publications and is based on the 2008 *Clinical Policy: Neuroimaging and Decisionmaking in Adult Mild Traumatic Brain Injury in the Acute Setting*, jointly produced by CDC and ACEP.