



Sport-related concussion info guide

What is a concussion?

- A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury caused by a blow to the head or body that causes a chemical change in the brain.
- Most concussions do not involve loss of consciousness.
- Signs and symptoms of concussion usually develop immediately but may be delayed by hours or even days.
- Symptoms may change over time, and certain activities or environments may worsen symptoms.
- Concussions are not graded anymore; there is no such thing as a mild, moderate or severe concussion. Every concussion is different and requires an individualized treatment plan. The sooner you get specialized care, the sooner a customized treatment plan can be prescribed.

How is a concussion diagnosed?

There is no one specific test to diagnose concussion. Your comprehensive evaluation with our program will include a clinical interview focusing on symptoms as well as a thorough review of medical history, a screening to assess any changes in eye movements or balance, and neurocognitive testing. We use the ImPACT™ test to assess cognitive functioning. While it is helpful to have a preseason baseline test, it is not required. Imaging, such as a CT scan or MRI, is not necessary in most cases.

Warning signs and symptoms

Athletes experiencing any of the signs or symptoms listed below may have experienced a concussion and should follow the action plan immediately.

Signs observed by coach, athletic trainer, parents or teammates:

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| • Loss of consciousness | • Moving slowly/
clumsily |
| • Loss of balance | • Inability to recall
events right before
or after the injury |
| • Disorientation/
confusion | |
| • Vomiting | |

Symptoms reported by athlete:

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| • Headache | • Double/blurry vision |
| • Dizziness/
lightheadedness | • Fatigue |
| • Nausea/vomiting | • Feeling “foggy” |
| • Sensitivity to light | • Sleeping more/less
than usual |
| • Irritability | • Concentration/
memory problems |
| • Sensitivity to noise | |
| • Change in mood | |



Critical red flags

Seek immediate medical attention at the nearest ER if any of these occur:

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| • Persistent or
worsening headache | • Increasingly confused |
| • Seizure | • Numbness or
weakness in arms
or legs |
| • Unable to wake | • Unusual behavior
changes |
| • Slurred speech | |
| • Repeated vomiting | |

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What to do following a concussion:

For the first few days following a concussion, your athlete will likely be tired. Concussions require a significant amount of energy to heal, and high-quality sleep is important. However, following an initial rest period of 24 - 48 hours, it is important to establish and maintain a regulated schedule with the following considerations:

- **Sleep:** Keep a strict sleep schedule with a regular bedtime and wake time. Limit naps to 30 minutes or less.
- **Hydration:** Drink at least half your body weight in ounces of water per day. For example, a 100-pound person should drink a minimum of 50 ounces of water per day.
- **Diet:** Loss of appetite can occur, but it is important to consume enough calories to fuel your body and your brain. If the athlete is nauseous, try small snacks rather than large meals.
- **Physical activity:** Allow light activity, such as taking a walk, avoiding all activity that increases symptoms. Athletes will receive tailored recommendations for physical activity during their initial evaluation.
- **Stress:** Try to reduce stress as much as possible. Our team will provide academic accommodations and recommendations to help reduce stress.



What NOT to do following a concussion:

- Do not take ibuprofen, aspirin, naproxen or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
- Do not drive.
- Avoid isolating in a dark room. Spending time with family and having exposure to natural light is important.
- Do not engage in strenuous exercise, including weight lifting, or participate in sports.
- Limit or avoid playing video games.
- Avoid sporting events, concerts, or other loud, crowded environments.

Your concussion specialist will provide additional information regarding your athlete's injury at the time of initial evaluation. You will be given an individualized treatment plan, including academic accommodations/modifications as needed, behavioral considerations (i.e., a schedule of activity), recommendations regarding physical and cognitive activity, and a personalized return to play plan.



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