

Concussions:
A Fact Sheet for Parents and Athletes



KNOW THE **A B C**S OF CONCUSSIONS

Assess the situation

Be alert for symptoms

Contact a medical professional

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*
- *Can happen even if you haven't lost consciousness*
- *Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"*

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- *Headache or "pressure" in the head*
- *Nausea or vomiting*
- *Balance problems or dizziness*
- *Double or blurry vision*
- *Bothered by light, noise, or both*
- *Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy*
- *Difficulty paying attention*
- *Memory problems*
- *Confusion*
- *Does not "feel just right"*

What should you do if you suspect that you, or a teammate, have a concussion?

If you think you or a teammate may have a concussion, it is important to tell someone. Tell your coach or parents. Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. If you experience symptoms of a concussion, you should immediately remove yourself from practice or play. Tell your coach right away. Get evaluated by a health care provider. A health care provider experienced in evaluating for concussions can determine if you have a concussion, help guide management and safe return to normal activities, including school (concentration and learning) and physical activity. If you have been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a suspected or confirmed concussion, you may not participate again until evaluated by a health care provider and receive written clearance to return to activity. You must provide this written clearance to your coach.

Why should you tell someone about your symptoms?

1. Your chances of sustaining a life alerting injury are greatly increased if you aren't fully recovered from a concussion
2. Practicing/playing with concussion symptoms can prolong your recovery.
3. Practicing/playing with a concussion can increase your chances of getting another concussion
4. Telling someone could save your life or the life of a teammate.

Central District of USA Hockey adapted materials from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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What should I do if my child has a concussion?

Seek medical attention. A health care provider experienced in evaluating for concussions can direct concussion management and review when it is safe for your child to return to normal activities, including school (concentration and learning activities) and physical activity. If your child or teen has been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a suspected concussion or head injury, they may not participate again until he/she is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance to participate in the activity from the health care provider.

Help them take time to get better. If your child or teen has a concussion, her or his brain needs time to heal. Your child or teen should limit activities while he/she is recovering from a concussion. Exercising or doing activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, using a computer, texting, or playing video games may worsen or prolong concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness). Rest will help your child recover more quickly. Your child may become upset that he/she cannot participate in activities.

Together with your child or teen, learn more about concussions. Talk about the potential long-term effects of concussion and the problems caused by returning to daily activities too quickly (especially physical activity and learning/concentration).

How can I help my child return safely after a concussion?

Help your child or teen get needed support when returning to school after a concussion. Talk with your child's school administrators, teachers, school nurse, coach, and counselor about your child's concussion and symptoms. Your child may feel frustrated, sad, and even angry because s/he cannot keep up with school work and learn as well after ac concussion. Your child may also feel isolated from peers and social networks. Talk often with your child about these issues and offer your support and encouragement. As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually. Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed,
- Spend fewer hours at school,
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments,
- Receive help with schoolwork, and/or
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer.

To learn more go www.cdc.gov/Concussions or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)