

Concussion Awareness

What is a concussion?

- Occurs when an athlete is moving at a high rate of speed and collides with another object.
- The brain shifts inside the skull and strikes the bony surfaces.
- An athlete can suffer a concussion without actually striking their head.
- The result is a mild traumatic brain injury that changes normal brain function
- Can happen with or without a loss of consciousness

Signs and Symptoms



- Nausea, vomiting
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Fatigue
- Light headedness
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Disorientation
- Seeing bright lights or stars
- Feeling of being stunned
- Depression
- Inappropriate behavior
- Decreased work/playing ability
- Inability to perform daily activities
- Cognitive and memory dysfunction (reduced attention, difficulty concentrating)
- Sleep disturbances
- Vacant stare
- Poor balance

A concussion should be suspected in presence of **any one** of the above.

Immediate Response

- Remove the player from the current game or practice
- Do not leave the player alone; monitor for signs and symptoms
- Do not administer medication
- Inform the coach, parent or guardian about the injury
- The player should be evaluated by a medical doctor after any blow to the head

Return to Activity

Return to activity should be gradual and monitored by a medical professional.

Return to play steps should include:

Step 1: No activity.; only complete rest

- **Step 2:** Light aerobic exercise
- **Step 3:** Sport specific activities
- **Step 4:** Drills without body contact; light resistance training
- **Step 5:** Drills with body contact
- **Step 6:** Game play

Athletes should proceed through these steps only when they are symptom free and there should be 24 hours between each step.

Prevention

- Pre-season concussion screening asking about previous symptoms and incidents is important.
- Complete a baseline cognitive assessment and symptom score for each athlete.
- All athletes should be properly educated on the correct sport technique and safety rules need to be enforced.
- Protective equipment must be certified, good quality, well maintained and properly fitted.
- Coaches, parents and athletes need to recognize the signs/symptoms of a concussion.