

ATHLETE & PARENT CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury changing the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head of 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. The concussion may or may not cause you to blackout or pass out.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after the injury or may not be noticed until days or weeks after an injury.

Should an athlete report one or more symptoms of a concussion after an injury s/he should be kept out of play the day of the injury, even if concussion is only suspected. Athletes should only return to play with permission from a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussions.

WHY SHOULD ATHLETES REPORT 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 concussion 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.

**▶ WHEN IN DOUBT
SIT THEM OUT!**

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

ATHLETES REPORT

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

REPORTED BY PARENTS OR COACHES

- 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
- Shows mood, behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior or after hit or fall



POST-CONCUSSION HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

WARNING SIGNS

Call your local ER department immediately if your child experiences any of the following:

- Decreasing level of consciousness/ Loss of or fluctuating level of consciousness
- Irregularity in breathing
- Increasing confusion, irritability or restlessness
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Pupils becoming unequal in size
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Seizures or convulsions
- Slurred speech or inability to speak
- Inability to recognize people or places
- Severe or worsening headache

Return to Sport

If your child has any signs or symptoms of a concussion, s/he will need to be evaluated by a doctor. The doctor may recommend that s/he complete a return-to-play protocol to ensure s/he is safe to return to sport. A health care provider must clear athletes before returning back to athletics, this is required Nebraska state law. The physical therapist of your choice will work with your doctor to determine when it is safe for your child to return to their sport.

S/he should absolutely not return to play or practice on the same day as the suspected concussion occurred.

Your child may NOT begin the return-to-play progression until ALL symptoms are gone for at least 24 hours.

Symptoms indicate that the brain has not yet recovered from the concussion and needs more rest. The brain is vulnerable to further injury and very sensitive to any increased stress until it fully recovers.

Steps to Recovery

It is OK to:

- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) for headaches initially. However, you will be asked NOT to take any medications that may mask your symptoms of a concussion once you begin the return-to-play progression. Also you are not considered symptom free for 24 hours if you are using acetaminophen to manage concussion symptoms.
- Use ice pack on head and neck as needed for comfort.
- Eat a carbohydrate-rich diet.
- Go to sleep.
- Rest (no strenuous cognitive or physical activity).

There is NO need to:

- Check eyes with flashlight.
- Wake up frequently (unless otherwise instructed).
- Test reflexes.
- Stay in bed.

Do NOT:

- Engage in physical activity (e.g., exercise, weight lifting, P.E., sport participation).
- Engage in mental activity (e.g., school, job, homework, computer games) that makes symptoms worse.
- Expose yourself to loud noises or bright lights including phones, T.V., computers.
- Drink alcohol, use recreational drugs.

Resources: www.cdc.gov/concussion

Broglio SP, Cantu RC, Gerard AG, et al. National Athletic Trainers' Association Position Statement: Management of Sport Concussion. *Journal of Athletic Training* 2014;49(2):000-000.

McCrary P, Meeuwisse WH, Aubry M, et al. Consensus statement on concussion in sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich in November 2012. *Br J Sports Med* 2013;47:250-258.

Questions? Contact the SRMC Rehab Services Team at 308-254-5355