



THE FACTS

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in *any* sport or recreation activity.
- Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

A bump, blow, or jolt to the head can cause a concussion, a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI). Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly 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.

RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for and ask others to report the following two things among your athletes:

1. A forceful bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
- and--
2. Any change in the athlete’s behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.

Athletes who experience **one or more** of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussions, says they are symptom-free and it’s OK to return to play.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE
<p>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 (<i>even briefly</i>) Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes Can't recall events <i>prior</i> to hit or fall Can't recall events <i>after</i> hit or fall</p>	<p>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"</p>

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 not only does not diminish, but 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 (a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously and the student should be carefully monitored).

WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, implement your four-step action plan:

1. **Remove the athlete from play.** Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. When in doubt, sit them out.
2. **Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:

- Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body
 - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
 - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
 - Any seizures immediately following the injury
 - Number of previous concussions (*if any*)
3. **Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them CDC's fact sheet on concussions.** This fact sheet can help parents monitor the athlete for signs or symptoms that appear or get worse once the athlete is at home or returns to school.
 4. **Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussions, says s/he is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

Take a FREE online training on concussions or get more information and educational resources on concussions, go to: www.cdc.gov/Concussion

The above information was provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Also, please note that concussion awareness disclosures, protocols and requirements may be mandated by state or local law. Consult applicable laws for legal requirements.