

Concussions

FACT SHEET FOR ATHLETE/PARENT

SANFORD
ORTHOPEDICS
SPORTS MEDICINE

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a blow to the head or body. A sudden rapid movement of the head can cause the brain to bounce or twist inside the skull. This damage changes the way your brain normally works. Even a mild bump or blow can result in a concussion. The effects of a concussion can be serious. If your child/athlete reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the signs yourself, seek medical attention right away. Please be advised, some signs and symptoms may develop over time, especially early in the injury process.



COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS ARE:

Observed:

- Confusion
- Uncoordinated movements
- Loss of consciousness
- Behavioral/personality changes
- Difficulty answering questions
- Inability to recall events
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness

Reported:

- Headache
- Light sensitivity
- Noise sensitivity
- Nausea/vomiting
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Vision changes
- Confusion
- Difficulty focusing
- Feeling slowed down or in a fog
- Balance or coordination difficulties



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

1. Immediately stop playing or practicing your sport for that day, and tell your coach and parents.
2. Look for signs and symptoms of concussion.

Note: Seek care quickly if symptoms significantly worsen or if there are behavioral changes. Watch for any of the following serious signs/symptoms, which may not appear immediately after the injury. Go to the nearest emergency department if you experience any of the following signs and symptoms:

- Increasing of severe headache
 - Slurred speech
 - Pupils unequal or unreactive
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Uncharacteristic behavior changes
 - Fluctuating consciousness
 - Seizure/convulsions
 - Repeated vomiting
 - Severe cervical pain
 - Increasing confusion
 - Weakness/numbness in arms or legs
3. Rest your brain and body for 24-48 hours after the concussion.
 4. Visit your healthcare provider.



REDUCING THE RISK

Every sport is different; but there are steps athletes can take to protect themselves.

- Always practice good sportsmanship.
 - Follow all safety regulations and rules of the game.
- Avoid using one's head/helmet as a weapon.
- Use appropriate protective equipment (e.g., helmets, padding, shin guards, eye protectors, and mouth guards).
 - Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Understand the risks and dangers of a concussion.
- A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first – usually within a short period (hours, days, or weeks) – can slow recovery and increase the likelihood of having long-term or permanent problems.

Athletes with a known or suspected concussion should be removed from play, practice, or training until they have been evaluated and given permission to return to play by a healthcare professional with experience in evaluating and managing concussions.

Most athletes who experience an initial concussion will recover completely, as long as return to learn and return to activity guidelines are followed.

Our Sanford programs provide parents, coaches, physicians, and school administrators the most cutting edge return-to-learn and -activity decisions.

THE FACTS

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport.
- An athlete can still get a concussion even when wearing a helmet.
- Affected athletes may not report their symptoms for fear of losing playing time or their positions.
- Rapid recognition and proper management of concussions can prevent further injury and speed recovery

IF YOU SUSTAINED A CONCUSSION:

The best way to promote recovery is to follow a routine schedule for sleep, diet, hydration and modified, non-contact physical activity.

It is okay to:

- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Use ice pack on head and neck
- Eat a normal diet
- Stay hydrated
- Go to sleep
- Rest

There is no need to:

- Check eyes with flashlight
- Take away all electronics
- Test reflexes
- Stay in bed
- Wake every hour

Please do not:

- Drink alcohol
- Take sleeping pills or sleeping aides
- Take products that contain ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
- Take products that contain aspirin or naproxen (Aleve)
- Drive until medically cleared

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Regarding the Sports Concussion Program at Sanford Orthopedics & Sports Medicine or schedule an appointment call:

Aberdeen (605) 226-5500
Bemidji (218) 751-9746
Bismarck (701) 323-8920
Fargo (701) 417-6000
Sioux Falls (605) 328-2663

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