

Concussion Education For Parents, Student-Athletes & Coaches

Gerard A. Gioia, Ph.D.

Pediatric Neuropsychologist

Chief, Division of Pediatric Neuropsychology

Director, Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery & Education (SCORE) Program
Children's National Medical Center
Washington, DC

202-476-2429

www.childrensnational.org/score

Concussion Materials

Fact Sheet



THE FACTS

- All concussions are serious.
- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

There's no doubt about it: sports are a great way for kids and teens to stay healthy while learning important team-building skills. But there are risks to pushing the limits of speed, strength, and endurance. And athletes who push the limits sometimes don't recognize their own limitations—especially when they've had a concussion.

That's where you come in. It's up to you, as a coach, to help recognize concussion and make the call to pull an athlete off of the field if you think an athlete might have one. Playing with a concussion can lead to long-term problems. It can even be fatal.

What Is a Concussion?

A bump, blow, or jolt to the head can cause a concussion, a type of traumatic brain injury. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth—literally causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull. This sudden movement of the brain causes stretching and tearing of brain cells, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. Once these changes occur, the brain is more vulnerable to further injury and sensitive to any increased stress until it fully recovers.

Unlike a broken ankle, or other injuries you can feel with your hands, or see on an x-ray, a concussion is a disruption of how the brain works. It is not a "bruise to the brain."



How Can I Recognize a Possible Concussion?

On the football field, concussions can result from a fall or from players colliding with each other, the ground, or an obstacle, such as a goal post. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

As a coach you are on the front line in identifying an athlete with a suspected concussion. You know your athletes well and can recognize when something is off—even when the player doesn't know it or doesn't want to admit it.

Sometimes people wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play while injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Some athletes may also try to hide the symptoms. Don't let your athlete convince you this is "just fine" or that he can "tough it out." Emphasize to athletes and parents that playing with a concussion is dangerous.

Remember, you can't see a concussion, like you can see a broken ankle, and there is no one single indicator for concussion. Recognizing a concussion requires watching for different types of signs or symptoms.

Clipboard Sticker

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience any of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff	Symptoms Reported by Athlete
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or "pressure" in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall	Confusion
Can't recall events after hit or fall	Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

1. Remove athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health care professional says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Medical Services	Name: _____
Phone: _____	
Health Care Professional	Name: _____
Phone: _____	
School Staff Available During Practice	Name: _____
Phone: _____	
School Staff Available During Games	Name: _____
Phone: _____	

For more information and safety resources, visit www.cdc.gov/concussion or www.usafootball.com.

WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!

Heads Up to Schools: KNOW YOUR CONCUSSION ABCs

Assess the situation | Be alert for signs and symptoms | Contact a health care professional

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious.

Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be addressed correctly.

A Fact Sheet for Parents

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after an injury or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury. It is important to watch for changes in how your child or teen is acting or feeling, if symptoms are getting worse, or if s/he just "doesn't feel right." Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

If your child or teen reports *one or more* of the symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away. Children and teens are among those at greatest risk for concussion.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about events
- Answers questions slowly
- Repeats questions
- Can't recall events prior to the hit, bump, or fall
- Can't recall events after the hit, bump, or fall
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Forgets class schedule or assignments

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD OR TEEN

Thinking/Remembering:

- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Feeling more slowed down
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy

Physical:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Does not "feel right"

Emotional:

- Irritable
- Sad
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous

Sleep:

- Drowsy
- Sleeps less than usual
- Sleeps more than usual
- Has trouble falling asleep

**Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.*

To download this fact sheet in Spanish, please visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion. Para obtener una copia electrónica de esta hoja de información en español, por favor visite www.cdc.gov/Concusion.



THE FACTS

- All concussions are **serious**.
- Most concussions occur **without** loss of consciousness.
- Recognition and proper response to concussions when they **first occur** can help prevent further injury or even death.

How Can I Recognize a Possible Concussion?

1. A forceful bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
-and-
2. Any concussion signs or symptoms, such as a change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.

WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT

Coach's Clipboard Sticker

HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN FOOTBALL



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Athletes who experience any of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff	Symptoms Reported by Athlete
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or "pressure" in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall	Confusion
Can't recall events after hit or fall	Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

For more information and safety resources, visit
www.cdc.gov/Concussion or www.usafotball.com.

ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

1. Remove athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health care professional says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Medical Services

Name:

Phone:

Health Care Professional

Name:

Phone:

School Staff Available During Practice

Name:

Phone:

School Staff Available During Games

Name:

Phone:

WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT

4-Step ACTION PLAN

1. Remove the player from the game/ practice. Look for Signs & Symptoms.
2. Encourage a medical checkup with appropriate health care professional.
3. Inform the parents; Refer to Parent Fact Sheet.
4. Allow return to play only with permission from an appropriate health care professional.

WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT

After a Concussion, When Can the Player Return to Play?

- No symptoms – at rest and after physical exertion
- Cognitive/ thinking skills back to “normal.”
- Have passed the Gradual Return-to-Play program.
- Cleared by appropriate healthcare professional.

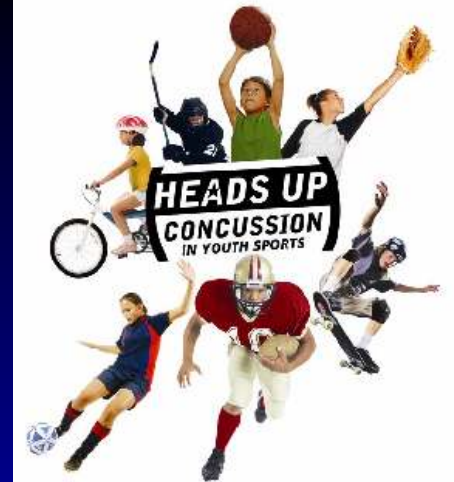
WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT



Issues

- Equipment
- Baseline Neuropsychological Testing
- Post-Injury Evaluation & Management
 - School
 - Athletics

Websites



www.sportsconcussions.org

www.cdc.gov/concussion

www.usafootball.com

www.childrensnational.org/score