

CONCUSSIONS

What is a concussion?

- ▶ A “mild” type of brain injury caused by acceleration or deceleration injuries, or a direct blow to the head
- ▶ Injury is due to the brain hitting or twisting in the skull
- ▶ Improper management can lead to negative long term consequences

Facts about concussions:

- ▶ 1.6-3.8 million concussions occur annually
- ▶ 53% of high school athletes report having a concussion before beginning high school sports
- ▶ More concussions occur during games than practices
- ▶ A history of concussions increases likelihood of additional concussions
- ▶ Concussion symptoms last longer in younger athletes

MANAGEMENT FOR COACHES

The CDC “HEADS UP” information recommends a 4 step action plan:

1. Remove the athlete from play if there is ANY concern of concussion
2. Seek medical attention
(The athlete should not return to play until they have been evaluated and cleared by a medical professional)
3. Communicate with the athlete’s parents
4. Follow medical provider’s instructions regarding return to play
 - ▶ Return to play is a slow, multi-day progression that begins after the athlete is symptom free

IN THE MOMENT EVALUATION

Knowing whether an athlete needs to be removed from play requires one’s best judgement, remembering it is always better to err on the side of caution. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ Give the athlete a minute to collect themselves- if possible let them sit for a play or two
- ▶ Look for a dazed appearance or a blank stare
- ▶ Ask questions to evaluate for symptoms of a concussion such as:
 - ▶ “Does your head hurt?”
 - ▶ “Are you nauseous or dizzy?”
 - ▶ “Do you know where you are?”
 - ▶ “Do you remember what just happened?”
 - ▶ “Do you know the score of the game?”
- ▶ If the athlete’s behavior or answer to any questions is concerning, remove them from play

Resources for additional information

- ▶ CDC “HEADS UP” (<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/>)
 - ▶ Informational handouts and videos for coaches, parents, healthcare providers, athletes, schools
- ▶ Sports Concussion Institute (<http://www.concussiontreatment.com/concussionfacts.html>)
- ▶ American Academy of Neurology (<https://www.aan.com/concussion>)
- ▶ NFHS learning center (<https://nfhslearn.com/courses?searchText=Concussion>)
 - ▶ Free concussion training courses

SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

Headache

Dizziness

Confusion

Balance difficulty

Nausea/vomiting

Blurry vision

**Issues
concentrating**

Observed by coach:

Dazed appearance

Memory change

**Brief loss of
consciousness**

Mood change

**Symptoms may
occur right
after the injury
or days later!**