

Understanding Concussion

Educational Material for Parents and Students (Content Meets MDCH Requirements)

Common Symptoms

Headache	Balance Problems	Sensitive to Noise	Poor Concentration	Not "Feeling Right"
Pressure in Head	Double Vision	Sluggishness	Memory Problems	Feeling Irritable
Nausea/Vomiting	Blurry Vision	Haziness	Confusion	Slow Reaction Time
Dizziness	Sensitive to Light	Fogginess	"Feeling Down"	Sleep Problems
		Grogginess		

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way a brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a fall, bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. A concussion can be caused by a shaking, spinning, or a sudden stopping and starting of the head. Even a "ding", "getting your bell rung", or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. A concussion can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If the student reports any symptoms of a concussion, or if you notice symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away. A student who may have had a concussion should not return to play on the day of the injury and until a health care professional says they are okay to return to play.

If you suspect a concussion:

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY – A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for the student to return to regular activities, including sports. Don't hide it. Report it. Ignoring symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes it worse.

KEEP YOUR STUDENT OUT OF PLAY – Concussions take time to heal. Don't let the student return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says it's okay. A student who returns to play too soon, while the brain is still healing, risks a greater chance of having a second concussion. Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults. Repeat or second concussions increase the time it takes to recover and can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting the student for a lifetime. They can be fatal. It is better to miss one game than a whole season.

TELL THE SCHOOL ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION(S) – Schools should know if a student had a previous concussion. A student's school may not know about a concussion received in another sport or activity unless you notify them.

Signs observed by parents:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused
- Forgets an instruction
- Can't recall events
- Is unsure
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

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Concussion Awareness Continued...

Concussion Danger Signs

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain if a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. A student 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 is larger than the other
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people/places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

How to Respond to a Report of a Concussion:

If a student reports one or more symptoms of a concussion after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body s/he should be kept out of athletic play the day of the injury. The student should only return to play with permission from a healthcare professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. During recovery, rest is key.

Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration (such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games) may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. Students who return to school after a concussion may need to spend fewer hours at school, take rest breaks, be given extra help and time, spend less time reading, writing or on a computer. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be monitored by a healthcare professional.

Remember: Concussion affects people differently. While most students with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, even weeks. A more serious concussion can last months or longer.

To learn more, visit: www.cdc.gov/concussion