

CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR ATHLETES

What is a CONCUSSION?

A concussion is an injury to the brain. A concussion can be from a direct hit to the head or from getting checked or tackled. Symptoms of a concussion may appear immediately or may not appear for several hours or even days. It's important not to hide the fact that you are experiencing symptoms of a concussion, and to tell your coach immediately.

Concussion PREVENTION

- + There are no "concussion proof" helmets available on the market. Wearing appropriate protective gear can reduce the risk of injury, but no equipment can prevent concussions.
- + Make sure that you follow the rules for your sport. Many rules are designed to prevent unsafe conditions where a concussion may happen. For example, do not lower your head when tackling in football.
- + You should be strong enough to participate at the level of sport you are currently in. This is especially important with the muscles of your neck.
- + It is important that you not hide the fact that you are experiencing symptoms of a concussion. If you are having any symptoms, you should let your coach, parent, or athletic trainer know.
- + If you think that one of your teammates has sustained a concussion, you should let your coach know immediately.

If you think YOU HAVE A CONCUSSION

- + **Tell your coach immediately.** A concussion is a serious injury to your brain. You should let your coach, parent, or athletic trainer know immediately if you think you have a concussion. Trying to play through a concussion is dangerous, and can make your injury worse!
- + **Rest is the key to recovery.** Both mental and physical rest are required to recover from a concussion. It is extremely dangerous to return to activity while your brain is healing from a concussion. Returning to activity too soon puts you at risk of permanent brain damage.
- + **Ask for help in the classroom.** There are both physical and mental effects of concussion. By asking for help, you will speed up your recovery and limit the negative effects of a concussion on your grades.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS of a Concussion

SIGNS ARE THINGS OTHERS SEE:

- ... Appears confused or dazed
- ... Can't recall things prior to being injured
- ... Can't recall things after being injured
- ... Loss of balance or coordination
- ... Loss of consciousness — no matter how long
- ... Seems irritable or other personality changes
- ... Forgets routine plays or position on the field

SYMPTOMS ARE THINGS YOU FEEL:

- ... Headache
- ... Dizziness
- ... Sick to your stomach and/or vomiting
- ... Feeling foggy or confused
- ... Sensitivity to light or noise
- ... Feeling sluggish or tired
- ... Problems concentrating
- ... Feeling "off" or "don't feel right"

Having only one symptom may indicate you have a concussion

For emergency care, Capital Health offers a dedicated Pediatric Emergency Department at Capital Health Medical Center – Hopewell. Neurology and neuropsychology experts from the Capital Institute for Neurosciences can provide thorough evaluation, follow-up, and treatment for teens and adults at our Hopewell and Langhorne locations.



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