

THIS INFORMATION MUST BE SHARED WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES AND PARTICIPANTS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH YOUR GENERAL LIABILITY CARRIERS REQUIREMENTS. FEEL FREE TO POST THIS INFORMATION AT YOUR FACILITY AND MAKE A PART OF YOUR EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK.

How Can I Recognize a Possible Concussion?

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes:

- A forceful bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head. AND
- Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.

Athletes who experience **any** of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (*even briefly*)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events *prior* to hit or fall
- Can't recall events *after* hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

Remember, you can't see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. Most people with a concussion will recover quickly and fully. But for some people, signs and symptoms of concussion can last for days, weeks, or longer.

What Should I do If a Concussion Occurs?

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, implement your 4-step action plan:

1. **Remove the athlete from play.** Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.
 2. **Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
 - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body
 - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
 - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
 - Any seizures immediately following the injury
 3. Number of previous concussions (*if any*)
- Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.** Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

4. **Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

What Can I Do to Prevent Concussions?

As a coach or parent, you play a key role in preventing concussions and responding properly when they occur. Here are some steps you can take to help prevent concussions and ensure the best outcome for your athletes, the team, league or school.

Preseason

FAQs about Baseline Testing among Young Athletes >>

Check with your league, school, or district about concussion policies. Concussion policy statements can be developed to include a commitment to safety, a brief description about concussion, and information on when athletes can safely return to play (i.e. an athlete should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play). Parents and athletes should sign the concussion policy statement at the beginning of each sports season.

Involve and get support from other parents and/or league or school officials to help ensure that the concussion policy is in place before the first practice.

Create a concussion action plan. To ensure that concussions are identified early and managed correctly, have an action plan in place before the season starts. This plan can be included in your school or district's concussion policy.

Educate athletes and other parents or coaches about concussion. Before the first practice, talk to athletes and parents, and other coaches and school officials about the dangers of concussion and potential long-term consequences of concussion. Explain your concerns about concussion and your expectations of safe play. Show the videos and pass out the concussion fact sheets for athletes and for parents at the beginning of the season and again if a concussion occurs. Remind athletes to tell coaching staff right away if they suspect they have a concussion or that a teammate has a concussion.

Monitor the health of your athletes. Make sure to ask if an athlete has ever had a concussion and insist that your athletes are medically evaluated and are in good condition to participate. Some schools and leagues conduct preseason baseline testing (also known as neurocognitive tests) to assess brain function—learning and memory skills, ability to pay attention or concentrate, and how quickly someone can think and solve problems. These tests can be used again during the season if an athlete has a concussion to help identify the effects of the injury. Prior to the first practice, determine whether your school or league would consider conducting baseline testing.

The above information is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and can be accessed along with the online course at: http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/online_training.html