

CDC Concussions Awareness — The Facts:

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity.
- Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

A bump, blow, or jolt to the head can cause a concussion, a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI). Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

Recognizing A Possible Concussion: To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for and ask others to report the following two things among athletes/participants:

- 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/participants who experience one or more 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 A Coach or Game Official

- 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/Participant

- 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
- Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

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

When A Concussion Is Suspected: If you suspect that an athlete/participant has a concussion, implement this four-step action plan:

1. Remove the athlete/participant from play. Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if the athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. When in doubt, sit them out.
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/team manager, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
 - a. Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body
 - b. Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
 - c. Any memory loss immediately following the injury
 - d. Any seizures immediately following the injury
 - e. Number of previous concussions (if any)
3. Inform the athlete's spouse, parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them CDC's fact sheet on concussion. This fact sheet can help parents monitor the athlete for sign or symptoms that appear or get worse once the athlete is at home or returns to work/school.
4. Keep the athlete/participant out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says s/he is 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.

Get more information and educational resources on concussion, at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/index.html>

Please also familiarize yourself with and comply with any State or Local laws that govern concussion awareness, concussion education and training, concussion protocols and/or other legal requirements which may apply in your jurisdiction.

The above information was provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Also, please note that concussion awareness disclosures, protocols and requirements may be mandated by state or local law.

Consult applicable laws for legal requirements. Also, take a free online training course on Concussion in Sports at www.nfhslearn.com.