



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury, and are caused by a blow or bump to the head. Some people lose consciousness or are knocked out, however, most cases do not result in a loss of consciousness. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or a mild bump or blow to the head can result in a concussion.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can develop right after the injury or may not appear until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms or concussion, or if you notice the symptoms, seek medical attention.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

Concussions can affect students in many different ways, and symptoms can vary from mild to more intense. Watch for any of the following signs or symptoms of a concussion. Monitoring for deterioration is essential over the first 24-48 hours after injury.

Signs (Observed by Coaches/Parents/Guardians)

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

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure “ in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not “feeling right” or “feeling down”

Every concussion is different and treatment should be specific to your case.

HOME INSTRUCTIONS

- Do not give your child any aspirin or Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Excedrin) for the first 24 hours
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be used for the first 24 hours
- Avoid driving a vehicle until cleared by a physician
- Do not participate in physical activity until assessed by a healthcare professional

Your child should be seen in an emergency department right away if she/he has or develops:

- One pupil larger than the other
- A headache that gets worse
- Drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- Weakness, numbness or decreased coordination
- Vomiting
- Convulsions or seizures
- Increased confusion, restlessness or agitation
- Is unsteady on her/his feet
- Has slurred speech
- Loss of consciousness (even brief loss of consciousness needs to be taken seriously)

RETURN TO ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Per Massachusetts law, before a student athlete with a concussion returns to athletic activity, they must be given medical clearance by an authorized medical provider (physicians, nurse practitioners, certified athletic trainers, physician assistants and neuropsychologists). The medical provider must receive DPH-approved training in traumatic head injury assessment and management or have received equivalent training as part of their licensure or continuing education.

WHY SEE A CONCUSSION SPECIALIST?

Decisions about when to return-to-school and sport can be complex, and most patients/parents need help with timing these decisions.

Dr. Sussman has additional training in concussion management.

