

SPORTS TIPS CONCUSSIONS

November 2018



Did You Know?

A concussion is a traumatic injury to the brain that alters mental status or causes other symptoms. Many people assume they do not have a concussion if they have not lost consciousness. However, significant injury can occur without losing consciousness at all. Football players often say “I just got my bell rung” when a blow to the head causes ringing in the ears, dizziness or headache, but those symptoms are often consistent with concussion.



A concussion can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body which causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, stretching and damaging the brain cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. Signs and symptoms of concussion can appear immediately after an injury or may not be noticed for hours or days following an injury.

If left undiagnosed, a concussion may place an athlete at risk of developing second impact syndrome—a potentially fatal injury that occurs when an athlete sustains a second head injury before a previous head injury has completely healed. **If you suspect your athlete has a concussion seek medical attention right away.**

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Signs and Symptoms

- Balance problems
- Difficulty communicating
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Fatigue
- Feeling emotional
- Feeling mentally foggy
- Headache
- Irritability
- Memory difficulties
- Nausea
- Nervousness
- Numbness or tingling
- Sadness
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Sleeping more than usual or difficulty falling asleep
- Visual problems – blurry or double vision
- Vomiting

**Team HEAL Sports Tips provide general information only and are not a substitute for your own good judgement or consultation with a medical doctor.*

Return to Play

Team HEAL Certified Athletic Trainers (ATC) will perform daily symptom assessments on an athlete that has sustained a concussion. Once the athlete is symptom free for 48 hours, and with the guidance of the ATC and medical doctors (MD), the athlete will begin a Return to Play Protocol. Upon completion of the protocol, the athlete will require clearance from an MD for full return to play. Team HEAL can provide a telemedicine session with a Sports Neurologist for clearance, if necessary.

Note: Return to play can be a lengthy process (days, weeks, months) depending on the severity and extent of injury and symptoms. Team HEAL's primary concern is the health and well-being of each athlete.

Baseline Testing

Team HEAL provides baseline concussion testing for your athletes. Baseline testing collects data on an athlete's cognitive and physical abilities prior to sustaining the concussion. Team HEAL's baseline testing includes a balance evaluation; vision assessment; and a neurocognitive evaluation that tests multiple areas of brain function, including memory, problem solving, reaction times, and brain processing speeds. Baselines are performed annually. Make sure your athlete has their baseline testing completed prior to the start of their season!

References

- American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Kutcher JS, Giza CC. Sports Concussion and Diagnosis Management. Continuum 2014
- <https://hiloischchiro.com>