

CONCUSSION 101

WITH MORE ATTENTION BEING PAID TO CONCUSSIONS, they're no longer being thought of as simple "bumps on the head" or "bell-ringers." Help keep young athletes protected by better understanding the symptoms, treatment and prevention of concussions.

- A concussion is defined as a "trauma-induced alteration in mental status that may or may not involve loss of consciousness."
- This can be caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth.
- Concussion signs and symptoms can appear immediately or not be noticed until days or even weeks after the injury.

HOW TO REMAIN SAFE ON THE FIELD

- Make sure all helmets and safety equipment are sport specific, properly fitted and refurbished according to industry standards.
- Follow sports safety rules and use proper techniques.
- Practice good sportsmanship.

YOU HAVE A CONCUSSION – NOW WHAT?

- **Report symptoms:** Tell a coach, parent or athletic trainer if you suspect an athlete has a concussion.
- **Get checked out:** Only a health care professional experienced with concussion management can tell if a concussion has occurred and when it is OK to return to play.
- **Rest and gradually return to activity:** After resting for the first 24 to 48 hours, gradually return to activities. It's OK to return to daily living with mild symptoms, just be cautious as to not exacerbate symptoms.
- **Give time to recover:** It's important to allot time to heal. Another concussion sustained while the brain is healing can result in long-term problems or even death in rare cases.
- **Take it slow at first:** After the physician or athletic trainer gives the OK to return to activity, an athlete shouldn't jump in all at once. The athletic trainer will work with the athlete to develop a safe plan for progressively returning to play.
- **Seek more information:** If there are concerns or questions, don't hesitate to bring them up to a health care provider such as an athletic trainer or physician.

KNOWING THE RED FLAGS

- CAN'T BE AWAKENED
- REPEATED VOMITING

- SLURRED SPEECH
- CAN'T RECOGNIZE PEOPLE OR PLACES



- WORSENING HEADACHE
- SEIZURES



- LOOKS LESS ALERT



- BALANCE PROBLEMS
- DIZZINESS

- INCREASING CONFUSION OR IRRITABILITY
- LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS
- WEAKNESS OR NUMBNESS IN ARMS OR LEGS
- UNUSUAL BEHAVIORAL CHANGE



- BOTHERED BY LIGHT OR NOISE
- SLOWED REACTION TIME
- SLEEP PROBLEMS

Sources: NATA, Sanford Orthopedic Sports Medicine, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Heads Up Concussion, Fifth Annual Youth Sports Safety Summit

Infographic provided by the National Athletic Trainers' Association (Updated 2023)