

# CONCUSSION

## INFORMATION FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

**What is a concussion?** A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head. It results in your brain not working like it should. It may or may not cause you to black out or pass out. It can happen to you from a fall, a hit to the head, or a hit to the body that causes your head and your brain to move quickly back and forth.

**How do I know if I have a concussion?** There are many signs and symptoms that you may have following a concussion that can affect your thinking, the way you feel, your mood, or your sleep. Here is what to look for:

Thinking/Remembering	Physical	Emotional/Mood	Sleep
Difficulty thinking clearly	Headache	Irritability-everything bothers you easily	Sleeping more than usual
Feeling slowed down	Fuzzy or blurry vision	Sadness	Sleeping less than usual
Difficulty concentrating	Feeling sick to your stomach/queasy	More moody	Trouble falling asleep
Difficulty remembering new information	Vomiting/throwing up	Feeling nervous or worried	
	Dizziness		
	Balance problems		
	Sensitivity to noise or light		

*Table is adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/>)*

**What should I do if I think I have a concussion?** If you are having any of the signs and symptoms listed above, you should tell your parents, coach, athletic trainer or school nurse so they can get you the help you need.

**When should I be particularly concerned?** If you have a headache that gets worse over time, you are unable to control your body, you throw up repeatedly or feel more and more sick to your stomach, or your words are coming out funny/slurred, you should let an adult like your parent or coach or teacher know right away, so they can get you the help you need before things get any worse.

**What are some of the issues that may affect me after a concussion?** You may have trouble in some of your classes at school or even with activities at home. If you continue to play or return to play too early with a concussion, you may have ongoing sadness, not feel like yourself, or have trouble remembering things for a long time. Once you have a concussion, you are more likely to have another concussion.

**How do I know when it's ok to return to physical activity and my sport after a concussion?** After telling your coach, your parents, and any medical personnel around that you think you have a concussion, you will probably be seen by a doctor trained in helping people with concussions. Your school and your parents can help you decide who is best to treat you and help to make the decision on when you should return to activity/play or practice. Your school will have a policy in place for how to treat concussions. You should not return to play or practice on the same day as your suspected concussion.

*You should not have any symptoms at rest or during/after activity when you return to play, as this is a sign your brain has not recovered from the injury.*

Ask your licensed athletic trainer, coach, or athletic director about

The Emergency Action Plan at your school

The concussion policy at your school

What you should do if you have a concussion

How to play your sport in the safest way

*This information is provided to you by the UNC Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related TBI Research Center, North Carolina Medical Society, North Carolina Athletic Trainers' Association, Brain Injury Association of North Carolina, North Carolina Neuropsychological Society, and North Carolina High School Athletic Association.*