

**What is a Concussion? |** A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) that may be caused by a bump, blow or sudden jolt to the head and/or neck. This sudden motion can cause the brain to move and hit inside the skull and can cause chemical changes in the brain or damage brain cells.

**Possible Symptoms Associated with Concussions |** Concussions can present very differently from person-to-person or even from concussion-to-concussion in the same person. Symptoms may not present immediately, and it may take a few hours to a few days following a blow to the head for symptoms to begin. For this reason, it is very important to pay close attention for any physical, cognitive, or emotional changes following a blow to the head or neck.

Symptoms may include:

Headache	Numbness or Tingling	Difficulty Concentrating
Nausea/Vomiting	Sensitivity to Noise	Increased Sadness
Dizziness	Sensitivity to Light	Nervousness
Balance Problems	Increased Irritability	Feeling More Emotional
Vision Changes	Drowsiness	Trouble Falling Asleep
Feeling “Off” or “Out of It”	Feeling Slowed Down	Sleeping More than Normal
Fatigue/Feeling More Tired	Difficulty Remembering	Sleeping Less than Normal

**Working with your Athletic Trainer |** The Athletic Trainer can assist in evaluating and recognizing concussions. The Athletic Trainer also plays a critical role in the care and recovery from concussions, and will lead athlete through a gradual, return-to-play progression with the goal of returning the athlete to sport as quickly, and as safely as possible. If an athlete, guardian, coach or teammate suspect that an athlete may have sustained a concussion, the athlete should report to the Athletic Trainer for evaluation. If a concussion is suspected, the Athletic Trainer will further discuss care instructions and individual modifications with the athlete and guardian(s). If symptoms allow, the athlete should continue to follow-up with the Athletic Trainer on a daily basis for continued re-evaluation of symptoms.

Additional Roles of the Athletic Trainer in Concussion Management:

- Regular communication with guardian(s) regarding changes in the athlete’s status or care plan
- Provide the athlete and guardian(s) with further referral recommendations when warranted
- Collaborate with school nurses and counselors to create individualized school modifications as needed
- Communicate with coaches regarding changes in the athlete’s status and during the return-to-play phase

**Home Care Instructions** | The athlete should be closely monitored by a guardian for at least 24-48 hours after sustaining a blow to the head. When caring for an athlete who has sustained a concussion:

<b>It is Okay to:</b>	<b>Do Not:</b>	<b>There is No Need to:</b>	<b>Avoid:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use Tylenol (acetaminophen) for headache</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use an ice or heat pack on the head or neck for comfort</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eat light, nutritious meals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Get plenty of rest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participate in any sports, PE classes, or other forms of physical activity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use ibuprofen (Advil), aspirin, naproxen (Aleve), or other anti-inflammatory medications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drive while symptomatic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be woken up every hour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large crowds and loud places</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bright lights and screens</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Playing video games or other activities that require intense focus</li> </ul>

**When to go to the Emergency Department** | If any of the following develop, the athlete should be immediately transported to the nearest Emergency Department for further evaluation and treatment:

Worsening Headache

Repeated Vomiting

Decreased Level of Consciousness

Dilated, Unreactive, or Unequal Pupils

Increased Confusion

Stumbling, Loss of Balance

Weakness or Numbness in Arms or Legs

Blurred or Tunnel Vision

Slurred Speech

Seizures

Unusual Behavior Changes

**When to see a Doctor** | Not every concussion may require physician evaluation. However, the athletic trainer may recommend referral to a physician knowledgeable in the evaluation and treatment of concussions if:

- The athlete has sustained a concussion in the past year, or has a significant history of concussions or other TBIs
- Symptoms have not improved, or worsen, in the days or week following the initial injury

**Returning to Life and School |** Changing classroom workload may be necessary so as not to delay the recovery of a concussion. A student-athlete whom has sustained a concussion may need rest breaks throughout the school day, or may require additional time to complete assignments or take tests. Examples of further modifications at school may include:

- Leaving class 5 minutes early to walk in a quiet hallway
- Eat lunch in a quiet room
- Use printed notes or assignments to minimize screen time
- Spending less time in loud classes, such as band, choir, drama, shop or tech ed.

The athletic trainer will assist in communicating classroom modifications with school nurses, counselors, and teachers.

**Returning to Sport |** For the safety of the athlete, it is important for the athlete to gradually return to sport in a stepwise fashion. This is done to ensure that the athlete does not have a recurrence of concussion symptoms as he or she integrates back into their sport, which may be an indicator that the athlete is not yet ready for competition. This return-to-play progression may look somewhat different for everyone depending on the presentation of the individual's symptoms. In many cases, the athlete may complete post-injury ImPACT testing to better ensure that he or she is physically and cognitively prepared to return to activity. The Athletic Trainer will coordinate an individualized return-to-play progression with the athlete and coaches, with the goal of returning the athlete to competition as quickly and safely as possible.

### **Additional Resources |**

[https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion\\_what.html](https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion_what.html)

<https://www.wiaawi.org/Health/Concussion-and-Sudden-Cardiac-Arrest-Information>