

# CONCUSSION INFORMATION

## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

**A concussion is an injury to the brain.** It is usually caused by a blow to the head. Most of the time, it doesn't involve a loss of consciousness. A concussion can result from a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. It can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works.

## WHAT'S THE RISK OF AN UNDIAGNOSED CONCUSSION?

Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious** and may result in **brain damage or death** if not recognized and managed properly. In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

Symptoms may show up right after the injury, but they can take hours or even days to fully appear. Seek medical attention if your child complains about any of the following:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Ringing in ears
- Nausea
- Pressure in head
- Neck pain
- Vision disturbance
- Loss of balance
- Memory loss (amnesia)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling sluggish or drowsy
- Drowsiness
- Sadness

## WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

You can't see a concussion, and your child may not recognize the symptoms. Seek medical attention right away if you notice any of these signs:

- Vacant facial expression
- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily or displays lack of coordination
- Answers questions slowly
- Slurred speech
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events surrounding the hit
- Seizures or convulsions
- Loses consciousness
- Appears dazed
- Repeats the same question/comment

## HOW IS A CONCUSSION DIAGNOSED?

First a doctor examines you. The doctor will also get information from people who were there when the concussion happened. This is very important, especially if you're confused or if you lost your memory of the injury. The doctor will test your strength, sensation, balance, reflexes and memory. In more serious cases, your doctor will want to get special x-rays of your head, called Computed Tomography (CT or CAT) Scans or Magnetic Resonance Images (MRI).

## DOES MEDICINE HELP?

The treatment for a concussion is rest. Always ask your doctor before you take any medicine after a concussion.

## WHAT SHOULD I WATCH OUT FOR?

See a doctor immediately if your child shows any of the following symptoms:

- Stiff neck
- Severe headache
- Repeated vomiting
- Confusion that gets worse
- Difficulty walking, speaking or using arms
- Convulsions
- Unusual sleepiness

## WHEN CAN I RETURN TO SPORTS?

Ask your doctor. You should never return to play while showing any signs of a concussion. Depending on the severity of the concussion, you may be out for one day or one month. If this wasn't your first concussion, your return to play may take even longer.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF RETURNING TO PLAY TOO EARLY?

A player returning too early could suffer from "second impact syndrome," which may be fatal. This problem is caused by a loss of the automatic control of blood vessels to the brain. Never return to a sports activity after a concussion until you are cleared by a doctor.

## ARE THERE ANY LASTING EFFECTS TO A CONCUSSION?

Most people recover from a concussion without any permanent damage. Signs and symptoms may last for months. Repeated concussions could cause permanent damage. After several concussions, your doctor may talk with you about changing sports.