

Post-Concussion Management Instructions

Recognize and Report

The first step in concussion management is to recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion. We don't always see the mechanism of injury so it is important to identify an athlete with signs of a concussion. Signs and symptoms include:

Physical		Cognitive	Emotional	Sleep
Headache	Visual Problems	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Drowsiness
Nausea	Fatigue/Feeling tired	Feeling slowed down	Sadness	Less than usual
Dizziness	Sensitivity to light/noise	Difficulty remembering	More emotional	More than usual
Balance Problems	Numbness/Tingling	Difficulty concentrating	Nervousness	Trouble sleeping

If you observe any of these symptoms below, go to the emergency department immediately. They are indicative of further damage to the brain or skull such as a hematoma or fracture.

Headache that worsens	Very drowsy	Can't recognize people or places
Seizures	Repeated vomiting	Increasing confusion
Neck pain	Slurred speech	Weakness/numbness in arms/legs
Unusual behavior change	Significant irritability	Less responsive than usual

For an athlete with a concussion, it is OK to stay in bed and take pain medicine as prescribed by your physician as well as sleep. There is no need to wake someone with a concussion every hour to check their vital signs. It is important that an athlete with a concussion not be allowed to drive while they have symptoms or participate in any physical activity without consent of supervising healthcare personnel.

Rest

The key to recovery is **REST**. Avoid physical (PE, sports, exercise) and cognitive (homework, TV, video games, reading, etc.) activities that elicit or worsen symptoms. Perform all activity in moderation and cease if symptoms arise. Do not participate in any activity that may cause another head injury as this may prolong recovery and lead to Second Impact Syndrome (SIS).

Return to Play

The athlete should **NEVER** return to PE, sports or other physical activity until they have been evaluated by an approved, licensed healthcare provider (physician, physician assistant, osteopath physician, athletic trainer neuropsychologist, or nurse practitioner). Once symptoms have resolved, the athlete may begin the gradual post-concussion return-to-play protocol as prescribed by a licensed healthcare provider.