



DiscNW Concussion Information Sheet

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury, and all brain injuries are serious. Concussions are caused by 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. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications, including prolonged brain damage and death, if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion, and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion might show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms experienced by the athlete might include one or more of the following:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• Sensation of pressure in the head• Nausea or vomiting• Neck pain• Balance problems or dizziness• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision• Sensitivity to light or noise• Feeling sluggish or slowed down• Feeling foggy or groggy• Drowsiness• Change in sleep patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amnesia• Not feeling “right”• Fatigue or low energy• Sadness• Nervousness or anxiety• Irritability• Feeling more emotional• Confusion• Concentration or memory problems (e.g., forgetting game plays)• Repeating the same question/comment |
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Signs observed by teammates, parents, and coaches might include one or more of the following:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appears dazed• 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slurred speech• Shows behavior or personality changes• Can’t recall events prior to hit• Can’t recall events after hit• Seizures or convulsions• Any change in typical behavior or personality• Loses consciousness |
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What can happen if my child keeps playing or returns too soon after a concussion?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often under-report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athletes' safety.

What do I do if I think my child has suffered a concussion?

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The **Zackery Lystedt Law** in Washington requires the consistent and uniform implementation of return-to-play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years:

A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time. A youth athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, sit the athlete out.

For up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:
<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>

*I have read all **two** pages of this Concussion Information Sheet and understand the nature and risk of head injury and concussion.*