

Concussions

FACT SHEET FOR COACHES

IF YOUR PLAYER HAS EXPERIENCED A BUMP OR BLOW TO THE HEAD DURING A GAME OR PRACTICE, LOOK FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS/ SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION:

Signs observed by coaching staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly or with difficulty
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms reported by athlete

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

Recognizing a possible concussion

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes:

A Forceful Blow to the head or body Results in rapid movement or deceleration of the head.
and

Any Change In the athlete's behavior, Thinking or physical functioning. (See the signs and symptoms of concussion listed on the next page)

PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

As a coach, you play a key role in reducing the risk for concussions and responding properly when they occur. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the best outcome for your athletes and the team.

- Talk with athletes and their parents about the dangers of concussions.
- Explain your concerns about concussion and your expectations of safe play to athletes, parents, and assistant coaches. Pass out the concussion fact sheet at the beginning of the season and again when a concussion occurs. Insist that safety comes first.
- Teach athletes safe playing techniques and encourage them to follow the rules of play.
- Encourage athletes to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure athletes wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let athletes persuade you that they're "just fine" after they have sustained any bump or blow to the head.
- Check with your youth sports league or administrator about concussion policies.
- Concussion policy statements can be developed to include the league's commitment to safety, a brief description of concussion and information on when athletes can return safely.
- A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery and increase the likelihood of having long-term or permanent problems.



WHAT SHOULD A COACH DO WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

1. Remove the athlete from play. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should be immediately removed and not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play. Ensure the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself.

Recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:

- Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head/body
 - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and, if so, for how long
 - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
 - Any seizures immediately following the injury
2. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give the fact sheet on concussion.
 3. Allow the athlete to return to play only with written permission from a health care professional.

Most athletes who experience an initial concussion will recover completely, as long as return to learn and return to activity guidelines are followed.

Our Sanford programs provide parents, coaches, physicians, and school administrators the most cutting edge return-to-learn and -activity decisions.

RETURN TO PLAY GUIDANCE & SUPPORT

- It is recommended that an injured athlete complete the graduated return to activity/play guideline*.
- Complete Rest
- Light Exercise
- Moderate Exercise
- Sport-Specific Exercise
- Non-Contact Practice
- Unrestricted Training
- Full Activity

*For more information on the Return-to-Activity Guidelines contact your Sports Concussion Program at Sanford Orthopedics & Sports Medicine or health care provider

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Regarding the Sports Concussion Program at Sanford Orthopedics & Sports Medicine or schedule an appointment call:

Aberdeen	(605) 226-5500
Bemidji	(218) 751-9746
Bismarck	(701) 323-8920
Fargo	(701) 417-6000
Sioux Falls	(605) 328-2663

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