



# Concussion Information for Parents



Concussions are traumatic brain injuries that must be taken seriously. Concussions can occur in any sport or recreational activity. That is why all coaches, parents, and athletes need to learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs. Below you will find information detailing concussion recognition, management and prevention. For more information please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Concussion in Sports website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>

## What is a concussion?

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can occur without the loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.<sup>1</sup>

## Signs and Symptoms<sup>2</sup>

### Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- 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"

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports", A Fact Sheet for Athletes. Available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches\\_Engl.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports", A Fact Sheet for Coaches. Available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches\\_Engl.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf).

## **What should you do if you think your teen has a concussion?**

### **1. Keep your teen out of play.**

If your teen has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. Don't let your teen return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says your teen is symptom free and it's OK to return to play. 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 or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

### **2. Seek medical attention right away**

A health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your teen to return to sports.

### **3. Teach your teen that it's not smart to play with a concussion.**

Rest is key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let your teen convince you that s/he's "just fine."

### **4. Tell all of your teen's coaches and the student's school nurse about ANY concussion.**

Coaches, school nurses, and other school staff should know if your teen has ever had a concussion. Your teen may need to limit activities while s/he is recovering from a concussion. Things such as studying, driving, working on a computer, playing video games, or exercising may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. Talk to your health care professional, as well as your teen's coaches, school nurse, and teachers. If needed, they can help adjust your teen's school activities during her/his recovery.<sup>3</sup>

# Riddell<sup>®</sup> for Parents

## CDC's Concussion Management Action Plan

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## How Can You Help Your Child Prevent a Concussion?

**Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.**

- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.<sup>4</sup>

## Helping Athletes Recover from a Concussion

Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. Ignoring symptoms and trying to “tough it out” often makes symptoms worse. Be patient because healing takes time. Only when your athlete's symptoms have reduced significantly, in consultation with a doctor, should they slowly and gradually return to their daily activities, such as work or school. If concussion symptoms come back or new symptoms arise as athletes become more active, this is a sign that they are pushing themselves too hard. Stop these activities and take more time to rest and recover. As the days go by, athletes can expect to gradually feel better.

**To help athletes recover, ensure that they:**

- Get plenty of sleep at night, and rest during the day.
- Avoid activities that are physically demanding (e.g., sports, heavy housecleaning, working-out) or require a lot of concentration (e.g., sustained computer use, video games).
- Ask their doctor when they can safely drive a car, ride a bike, or operate heavy equipment.
- Do not drink alcohol. Alcohol and other drugs may slow your recovery and put athletes at risk of further injury.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports”, A Fact Sheet for Parents. Available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/parents\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/parents_Eng.pdf).

<sup>5</sup>Adapted from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Facts about Concussion and Brain Injury.” Available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Fact\\_Sheet\\_ConcussTBI-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Fact_Sheet_ConcussTBI-a.pdf).