



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

- A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work.
- A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.
- Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost.
- The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common.
- Concussions can occur in any organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity.
- As many as 3.8 million sports- and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year.

THE FACTS

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can occur without 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.

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 that results in rapid movement of the head.
 - Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.
- (See the signs and symptoms of concussion.)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

- 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

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

ACTION PLAN

WHAT SHOULD A COACH DO WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

- Remove the athlete from play.
- Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head.
- Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should not be allowed to return to play.
- When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.

- Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.
- Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, 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
 - 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
 - Number of previous concussions (if any)
- Inform the athlete's parents or athletes' guardians about the possible concussion and direct them to the Parent Concussion Info sheet available on the RLL web site) .
- Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.
- Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion.
- A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems.
- Prevent common long-term problems and the rare second impact syndrome by delaying the athlete's return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.

LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

What licensed health care providers are trained in the evaluation and treatment concussions/brain of injuries and authorized to allow the athlete to return to play?

- Doctors (Medical MD)
- Doctor of Osteopathy (DO)
- Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP)
- Physicians Assistant (PA)
- Licensed Certified Athletic Trainers (ATC)

SUMMARY

If you think your athlete has sustained a concussion...take him/her out of play and seek the advice of a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.