

Caring For a Concussion

It is suspected that your student-athlete may have a concussion. A concussion is a traumatic brain injury. It may be caused by either a direct blow to the head or an indirect blow elsewhere to the body which transmits an impulsive force to the head. This causes the brain to move rapidly back and forth within the skull. When a concussion occurs, an “energy crisis” begins within the brain which results in impaired brain function and the presentation of symptoms.

At the time of evaluation it was determined that there was not a need for immediate transport to an emergency department. However, it is important that you observe your student-athlete closely for the next 24-48 hours in case signs of serious injury develop.

Your student-athlete showed symptoms of:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headache | <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness | <input type="checkbox"/> Neck pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea/vomiting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blurred vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Balance problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity to light | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity to noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty remembering | <input type="checkbox"/> Drowsiness | <input type="checkbox"/> Confusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in personality |

Other: _____

Emergency “red flag” symptoms which require immediate transport to nearest emergency department:

- Headache that worsens significantly
- Prolonged loss of consciousness (greater than 30 seconds)
- Significant midline neck pain, associated with any weakness or numbness of arms or legs
- Slurred speech
- Repeated vomiting
- Seizures
- Marked increase in irritability, confusion or unusual behavior
- Drowsy or cannot be awakened/aroused
- Unequal, dilated or unreactive pupils (black portion of eye)

Home Care

- Monitor student-athlete for worsening of symptoms
- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) only, as directed by the instructions on the packaging
- Use ice pack on head or neck
- For the first 24-48 hours, ample sleep may be needed. If no “red flag” symptoms are present, it is safe to allow the athlete to sleep through the night without need to awake every 30 minutes. After 48 hours, the focus shifts to getting 8-10 hours of quality sleep each night throughout the concussion recovery.
- Activities that stress the brain and eyes commonly increase concussion symptoms - homework, text messaging, video game, etc.
- It can help to take a 20 minute “brain break” for every 20 minutes spent concentrating on homework or other mentally demanding activities.
- Driving is not recommended for student-athletes while signs and symptoms are present- especially if they have dizziness, balance problems, blurred vision, light or sound sensitivity, poor concentration, difficulty remembering or drowsiness/fatigue

Return to Play

- Student-athletes that are diagnosed with a concussion are **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** to have input and signature from a physician with expertise in concussion management prior to full return.
- Before being cleared to resume full participation in athletics, athletes must successfully complete the required components outlined in the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act. This is a mandate by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.
- As Licensed Health Care Providers (LHCP), Athletic Trainers can oversee the return-to-play process. Please contact your school’s Athletic Trainer to learn more about concussions and the recovery process.
- To reduce the risk of Post-Concussion Syndrome or Second Impact Syndrome, the student athlete will not return to play until ALL signs and symptoms of the initial concussion have resolved.

If at any time there is a question of the wellbeing of your child, seek medical treatment immediately.