

## Concussion Information

Concussions are a type of traumatic brain injury that can range from a mild to severe disruption to how the brain normally works. Coaches, parents and athletes all need to be aware of the symptoms that can occur with a concussion.

After a person suffers a concussive traumatic brain injury some of the most common symptoms are headache, amnesia and confusion. Amnesia may or may not be preceded by a loss of consciousness and almost always does involve the loss of memory of the impact that did cause the concussion.

Other signs and symptoms of a concussion may also be included:

- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
- Amnesia surrounding the traumatic event
- Confusion or feeling as if in a fog
- Nausea or vomiting
- Ringing in the ears
- Dizziness or seeing stars
- Fatigue
- Slurred speech

There are some symptoms of a concussion that may be immediate or even delayed in onset by hours and even days after the injury. These symptoms include:

- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Complaints of trouble with concentration and memory
- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability and other personality changes
- Trouble with smell and taste

After a person has a head injury and the following occurs they should seek emergency care and see a physician.

- Headache that gets worse over time
- Changes in behavior that can include irritability or fussiness
- Confusion or disorientation
- Vomiting
- Slurred speech or other changes in speech
- Changes in physical coordination, including stumbling or clumsiness
- Changes in breathing pattern
- Vision or eye disturbances – includes pupils that are bigger than normal (dilated pupils) or pupils of unequal sizes
- Lasting or recurrent dizziness
- Large head bumps or bruises on areas other than the forehead.
- Blood or fluid discharges from the ears or nose

Other symptoms of head injury that should seek emergency care after a head injury are:

- Repeated vomiting
- Loss of consciousness that last more than a minute
- Obvious difficulty with mental function or physical coordination
- Seizures
- Symptoms that worse over time

A new state law states that the guidelines set up by the IHSA need to be followed for athletes and supported by a concussion policy put in place by the school board. What is basically stated is that no one should return to play or any vigorous activity while signs or symptoms of a concussion are present. It states that an athlete with a suspected concussion should not return to play until medically evaluated. The IHSA states that team physicians (the physician must be either an MD or DO) and athletic trainers can evaluate the athlete on the sidelines for possible return to play. The policy also recommends and states that any athlete with a concussion may not return to play on the same day of the injury. It is highly recommended that the athlete see a physician to get evaluated to return to play.

It is important for parents and athletes to understand these signs and symptoms of a concussion. There are times when an athlete may suffer a head injury and not report it to a coach or any athletic trainer. If a parent notices any of the signs or symptoms they need to inform the athletic trainer and see their family physician.