



## Getting the facts about concussion

### **How do you know if your child or athlete has suffered a concussion and what do you do if you suspect a concussion?**

A concussion is defined as a mild traumatic brain injury that occurs when your head is directly hit by an opponent or object, or indirectly caused by a sudden movement of the brain which causes it to hit inside the skull (such as a whiplash injury). Injury to the brain is believed to be caused by the rotational or angular forces causing a shear injury to brain tissue.

Concussions symptoms can last from days to several months, and even indefinitely. Symptoms from concussion can affect performance at school, work, as well as social skills. Unlike previously thought, those suffering severe concussions may not lose consciousness and symptoms might strike immediately, or can be delayed hours. Dr. Sara Murdick, Pediatrician and Sports Medicine Specialist at Metropolitan Pediatrics wants you to know the symptoms that are commonly missed by parents and coaches. She advises, “concussions can affect someone physically and cognitively but look for changes in mood and/or sleep disturbances. Feeling depressed, decreased attention, increased irritability, and anxiousness can all be signs that your child/athlete has suffered a concussion.”

### **How do you avoid making mistakes with your concussed athlete?**

Dr. James Chestnut, Medical Director at OHSU’s Concussion program and the Co-Director of Oregon’s Concussion Awareness and Management Program recommends, “Each club or school team should by law have a concussion management plan that includes coach, student, and parent education, and a standard concussion management plan. The next step is to watch for concussion symptoms in their athletes. Everyone must be prepared to **recognize** the symptoms of concussion and **remove** the athlete as soon as any signs of concussion arises- when in doubt keep them out. Its important not to minimize the symptoms of a concussion as every concussion is a traumatic brain injury. The athlete should be **referred** to their health care provider and an appropriate **medical release** must be obtained before the athlete is allowed to **return to play**.”

## **What is the treatment for a concussed child/athlete?**

Once a concussed athlete is taken to their health care provider, a battery of tests can be performed looking at cognition, balance, and memory, as well specific parameters for concussion assessments. A period of brain rest (determined by your healthcare professional) followed by a graduated return to normal activities helps the brain heal properly. A child or athlete may need to work on balance, visual tracking, tolerance to activity at home and in class, and tolerance to exercising again. Interesting enough, 80-90% of concussions that are properly cared for resolved in 7-10 days, but according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, more time may be needed for children and adolescents, or those with a history of prior concussions.

### TO FIND MORE ABOUT CONCUSSIONS VISIT:

**CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION SITE AT**  
[WWW.CDC.GOV/HEADSUP/INDEX.HTML](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/HEADSUP/INDEX.HTML)

**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS**  
[HTTPS://HEALTHYCHILDREN.ORG/ENGLISH/HEALTH-ISSUES/INJURIES-EMERGENCIES/SPORTS-INJURIES/PAGES/SPORTS-RELATED-CONCUSSION-UNDERSTANDING-THE-RISKS-SIGNS-SYMPTOMS.ASPX](https://HEALTHYCHILDREN.ORG/ENGLISH/HEALTH-ISSUES/INJURIES-EMERGENCIES/SPORTS-INJURIES/PAGES/SPORTS-RELATED-CONCUSSION-UNDERSTANDING-THE-RISKS-SIGNS-SYMPTOMS.ASPX)

**OREGON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION (OSAA)**  
[HTTP://WWW.OSAA.ORG/COACHES](http://WWW.OSAA.ORG/COACHES)

