

# HAVE A GAME PLAN FOR CONCUSSIONS



A Natividad Medical Center Community Program

## What Is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury in which a blow causes the brain to move suddenly. It can also occur when the head experiences a sudden force without being hit directly. While usually not life threatening, a concussion is serious and can have long-lasting consequences if symptoms are not recognized and treatment is not provided.

## How Do I Know If a Concussion Has Occurred?

Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up immediately or may not be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. **90% of concussions do not involve loss of consciousness.** Players who lose consciousness even momentarily or move in a clumsy way after an impact need careful evaluation.

## What Are the Symptoms of Concussion?

### Symptoms the athlete may sense or feel

- Dazed/confused
- Drowsiness
- Nauseated
- Blurry/double vision
- Dizziness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Headache
- Memory loss

### Symptoms observed by parents/coaches

- Unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Answers questions slowly
- Balance problems
- Forgets an instruction
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Changes in sleep patterns

Do not try to diagnose the severity of a head injury on your own. A medical professional will make that call after a careful evaluation. It is important to recognize signs of concussion – and take your child to an emergency room to be evaluated should any of these symptoms be present:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Nausea/vomiting
- Decreased coordination or unusual behavior
- A headache that gets worse
- Slurred speech
- Inability to stay awake

## What Happens After a Concussion?

Stop play if a concussion is suspected. Continuing to play with a concussion doubles recovery time for young athletes. Experiencing a second concussion before the first one heals increases the chances for serious long-term injury. The healing process may take days or weeks, depending on the severity of the injury.

## What Is the Treatment for Concussion?

There is no specific cure for concussion. Resting and restricting activities will allow the brain to recover. Rest means no reading, no listening to music, no watching TV. It means no texting, no email, no cell phone. Rest means physical rest AND mental rest.

## What Can Parents of Athletes Do?

Talk to your child about the importance of brain health. Players often feel loyalty to their team and may not recognize that to add value, and play at 100 percent, they need to be healthy. By understanding how to prevent, recognize and treat a concussion, you will facilitate your child's healthy return to play. Make sure the youth sports program has a graduated return to play protocol in place.



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