

## Quick Facts >

1. ALWAYS remove athletes immediately after suspecting a concussion. Do NOT allow return to play the same day with a concussion.
2. Athletes do NOT have to be knocked out to have a concussion. 90% of concussions occur without a loss of consciousness.
3. CT scans don't diagnose concussions. Everyone with a concussion has a normal CT scan.
4. It is OK to let someone fall asleep after being hit in the head. With careful monitoring, rest and sleep will be helpful.
5. "Warm Up for Return" is a graded process that requires a minimum of five days.
6. 9 out of 10 athletes will be back to normal within two weeks. They may miss a few games.
7. Kansas law requires a physician's signature (MD/DO) to "Return to Play."
8. Athletes who return to full contact too early risk Second Impact Syndrome, a rare but devastating brain injury that may result in death.
9. Concussions can affect driving, school work, sleep, emotions, relationships and self worth.
10. The "game plan" is not just about returning an athlete to their sport; it is about returning the person back to their life.

## Recognition >

### SIGNS OBSERVED BY OTHERS

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily or has slurred speech
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Cannot recall events prior to hit
- Cannot recall events after hit

### SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOU

- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or drowsy
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

## Definition >

A **concussion** is the most common form of head injury suffered by athletes. It is a form of traumatic brain injury that occurs when the brain is violently jarred back and forth or rotated inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. This can "stun" the brain cells or even result in their death. You **do not** need to lose consciousness to suffer a concussion.

Any athlete in motion is at risk for a concussion. This may occur in any sport, to boys and girls alike. Symptoms may appear immediately or develop over several days. They may last a few days to several months and interfere with schoolwork and social life.

## Management >

### How do I know if I have a concussion?

If you have any of the signs or symptoms listed under the "Recognition" section of this guide, then you may have a concussion. Don't ever play through a concussion because it's not worth the risk to your health and your life.

### What do I do if I think I might have a concussion?

Stop playing right away! Don't ignore a bump, blow or jolt to your head. Tell a referee, coach or athletic trainer about your symptoms. You should be immediately removed from practice or the game to avoid further injury. If symptoms develop at home or school, immediately tell a parent/guardian, teacher or coach.

### What happens when I report a possible concussion?

An athletic trainer, coach, EMT/paramedic or physician will evaluate you as soon as you report your symptoms. If there are not qualified health care professionals available at your practice or game, you need to call your doctor or go to the Emergency Department as soon as possible. If you do have a concussion, you will not be able to play your sport until cleared by a physician.

### What do I need to do while I continue to have symptoms of a concussion?

- Rest as much as possible. You may need frequent naps during the first few days after your injury.
- Avoid places with bright lights or loud noise and activities that stimulate your brain because mental rest is vital to your recovery. Eliminate or reduce watching television or movies, texting, reading, playing video games and browsing on a computer.
- Do not perform any physical activities, such as weightlifting, riding a bike, jogging, practice drills or other types of exercise.
- Stay home or only attend partial days if schoolwork makes your symptoms worse. Talk to your teachers. You may require more time to complete assignments and take tests, need written instructions for homework or need information repeated. Visit the school nurse if you have headaches.
- Do not drive because the symptoms from a concussion can slow your reaction times and lead to an accident.
- The more aggressively you rest your brain, the sooner you should heal from a concussion.

### How often do I need to see the doctor?

This will vary depending on the situation. If your symptoms are severe, the physician may want to see you on a daily basis for a few days. You may only have to go into the physician's office once a week. A physician must sign a written clearance form that you will take to school that says you are allowed to participate in full contact practice again. This is now a state law in Kansas.

## SCORE Card >

The first health care professional that evaluates you will fill out a concussion evaluation tool called a **SCORE Card**. If this first person is not your physician who you will visit during recovery, make sure you get a copy of **SCORE Card 1** to take to your physician appointment. This will contain important information that your physician will use to monitor your progression and return you to the game as soon as possible.

## Return to Play >

### When can I start playing my sport again?

Only consider starting the Warm-up to Play progression once you are fully participating in school again without any symptoms. Returning to your sport will be a step-by-step process. Once you have no symptoms or signs of concussion and achieve normalized results on **SCORE Card 2**, a medical authorization will start your **Warm-up to Play 4**. This process should be monitored by an athletic trainer, coach or designated school official.

Once you successfully complete the progression back to play, you will be authorized to start the "Warm-up to Play." At any time that you do not feel quite right, tell your doctor, parent, coach or athletic trainer immediately.

### After I am symptom-free, what is the progression back to play?

Think of this progression as a warm up for return to your sport. Taking at least 24 hours for each step before moving on to the next step is recommended.

If any symptoms recur, report this right away and stop and rest for the day. You must be completely symptom-free before starting the progression again.

- Step 1.** Light aerobic exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weightlifting.
- Step 2.** Running in a gym or on the field. No helmet or equipment should be used.
- Step 3.** Non-contact training drills and full equipment. Start light resistance training or light weight training.
- Step 4.** Full contact training under supervision of coach/athletic trainer.
- Step 5.** Return to competition or game play.

***You must be seen by a physician (MD/DO) during the warm up progression to be legally released for return to competition or practice.***

## Concerns >

### What are possible complications from a concussion?

While 90% of athletes are back to their baseline within 7-10 days, there are 10% of athletes who will experience prolonged symptoms or other complications.

This is called **Post-Concussive Syndrome** and occurs when symptoms from a concussion are prolonged. Difficulty with concentration, memory and persistent headaches are common symptoms.

Talk with the physician if symptoms last longer than a couple of weeks. A referral to a specialist for further evaluation and treatment may be required.

### What might happen if the athlete returns to his/her sport too soon?

If an athlete receives another blow while still recovering from a first concussion, he/she could develop **Second Impact Syndrome**. This syndrome can cause serious life-long health difficulties or, in rare situations, even result in death.

This possibility is a major reason why health care professionals are concerned about carefully treating any concussion. While the brain is still healing, it may not be able to compensate and protect itself from a new injury.

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Better to miss a game or two than  
the whole season or your whole life!

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## Other Resources >

**Kansas Law:** [www.kslegislature.org/li/b2011\\_12/year1/measures/hb2182/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2011_12/year1/measures/hb2182/)

**KSHSAA Guidelines:** [www.kshsaa.org/Public/General/ConcussionGuidelines.cfm](http://www.kshsaa.org/Public/General/ConcussionGuidelines.cfm)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** [www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html)

**Kansas Sports Concussion Partnership:** [www.kansasconcussion.org](http://www.kansasconcussion.org)

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