

## 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 ATHLETE

- 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

# PARENT'S CONCUSSION GUIDE

## 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 >

### What do I do if I suspect my child has a concussion?

Pull your child out of practice or the game immediately to avoid further aggravating the injury. Look for signs or symptoms listed under the "Recognition" section of this guide and report them to an athletic trainer, coach, EMT/paramedic or physician who will evaluate your child. If your child has a concussion, he/she will not be able to participate in practice or a game until cleared by a physician (MD/DO) as required by Kansas law.

### When does my child need to visit the Emergency Room?

Take your child to an Emergency Department if instructed to by the athletic trainer, coach, EMT/paramedic or physician who evaluated your child. If no qualified health professional is available to conduct an evaluation or if you have concerns about monitoring your child at home, proceed to an Emergency Department as soon as possible.

If the athlete is at home when severe symptoms appear, such as vomiting, severe headache, difficulty answering simple questions, loss of consciousness or seizures, proceed immediately to an Emergency Department for evaluation.

### What should I watch for at home?

- If your child is at home when you first recognize any symptoms listed under the "Recognition" section of this guide, immediately consult a physician so your child can be evaluated.
- After your child has been evaluated and returned home, **pay attention to see if symptoms worsen** and report them to a physician or proceed to the closest Emergency Department.

### How should I care for my child who still has symptoms of a concussion?

- Encourage your child to rest as much as possible. He/she may need frequent naps during the first few days after the injury. The more aggressive your child rests the brain, the sooner healing will occur.
- Your child should avoid places with bright lights or loud noise and activities that stimulate the brain because mental rest is vital to recovery. Eliminate or reduce watching television or movies, texting, reading, playing video games and browsing on a computer.
- Do not allow your child to perform any physical activities, such as weightlifting, riding a bike, jogging, practice drills or other types of exercise.
- Do not allow your child to drive because the symptoms from a concussion can slow his/her reaction times and lead to an accident.
- After your child has been evaluated, make sure a medical follow-up plan is in place.

### Does my child need to stay home from school?

If schoolwork makes your child's symptoms worse, he/she should stay home or only attend partial days. While at school, your child may require more time to complete assignments and take tests, need written instructions for homework or need new

information repeated. Written assignments and/or tests may need to be delayed. Discuss these issues with your physician, teachers and school officials and develop a plan to help your child fully recover physically, mentally and academically. Encourage your child to visit the school nurse if he/she has headaches at school. Finally, communicate often with your school's concussion management team during your child's recovery. For more information, consult KSCP's Return to Learn Safe Progression guide.

#### **How often do we need to see the doctor?**

This will vary depending on the situation. Your child may only have to visit the physician once a week. If symptoms are severe, the physician may want to see your child on a daily basis for a few days.

A physician (MD/DO) must sign a written clearance form for the school that says he/she is allowed to participate in full contact practice again. This is now a state law in Kansas.

#### **When should my child be referred to a specialist?**

If symptoms persist beyond 2 weeks or are unusually severe, consider discussing with your physician the need for a referral to a concussion specialist, such as a sports medicine physician, neurologist, neuropsychologist or physical medicine and rehabilitation physician.

## **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 a whole life!

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## **SCORE Card >**

The first health care professional that evaluates your child will fill out a concussion evaluation tool called a **SCORE Card**. If this first person is not the physician who will oversee your child's recovery, make sure to get a copy of **SCORE Card 1** for the physician. This will contain important information that the physician will use to determine how to care for your child's concussion and monitor his/her progression from the injury.

## **Return to Play >**

#### **When can my child start playing his/her sport again?**

Only consider starting the Warm Up to Play progression once your child is fully participating in school again without any symptoms.

Your child's return to sports will be a step-by-step process. Once your child has no symptoms or signs of concussion and achieves normalized results on **SCORE Card 2**, a medical authorization will start a **Warm-up for Return 4**. This process should be monitored by an athletic trainer, coach or designated school official.

Encourage your child to tell you, the coach, athletic trainer or physician immediately if he/she does not feel quite right at any time.

#### **After my child is symptom-free, what is the progression back to play?**

Think of this progression as a warm up for return to his/her sport. Each step takes at least 24 hours before moving on to the next step.

If any symptoms recur, your child should report this right away so he/she can stop and rest for the day. Before starting the progression again, your child must be completely symptom-free.

- 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.

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

## **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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