

CONCUSSIONS

A *Concussion* is defined as the immediate and transient impairment of neurologic function (a change in mental status or function). A concussion may be a consequence of an athlete's head striking an object (floor, another head, etc.), an object striking the athlete's head (ball, another head, bat/stick, etc.) or as a result of a sudden change of the direction of the head and neck (whiplash type injury). Regardless of the method of injury *concussions* generally produce similar clusters of *Signs* (things that can be observed by others) and *Symptoms* (things that are reported by the athlete). ***The grade or severity of a concussion is difficult to determine. You should not focus on the level of concussion but whether or not a concussion has occurred.*** The following charts should be used as guidelines for the coach to assess whether or not a concussion has occurred, what the appropriate course of action is at the time of injury and whether or not to allow the athlete to continue to play without physician clearance.

Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion	
Signs (Observed by coach, parent, staff)	Symptoms (Reported by the Athlete)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears to be dazed or stunned • Confused about assignment/tasks • Forgets plays; Unsure of game, score or opponent • Moves clumsily • Answers questions slowly • Loses consciousness (<u>even temporarily</u>) • Shows behavior or personality change • Retrograde Amnesia - Forgets events <u>prior</u> to hit or event that caused the concussion • Anterograde Amnesia - Forgets event <u>after</u> hit or event that caused the concussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Nausea and/or vomiting • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or blurry vision • Sensitive to light or noise • Feeling sluggish • Feeling "Foggy" • Change in sleep pattern • Concentration or memory problems • Altered emotional state for that athlete (anxiety, crying, being excessively angry, etc)
<p>Symptoms may worsen with exertion. Athlete should not return to play until symptom free!</p>	

On - Field Cognitive Testing - Complete in the order as follows:	
<p>Orientation - Ask the athlete the following questions. Answers should be quick and rapid.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stadium/field is this? • What city/town is this? • Who are we playing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What month is this? • What day is this?
<p>Anterograde Amnesia - Ask the athlete to repeat the following words. These words may vary if you like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girl • Dog • Green 	
<p>Retrograde Amnesia - Ask the athlete the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened in the prior period, quarter or play? • What do you remember just prior to being hit/falling? • What was the score of the game prior to being hit/falling? • Do you remember being hit/falling? 	
<p>Concentration - Ask the athlete to do the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat the days of the week backwards starting with today. • Repeat these numbers backwards: 63 (36 is correct) 419 (914 is correct) 	
<p>Word list memory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the athlete to repeat the three words from earlier. Girl - Dog - Green 	
<p><u>ANY</u> failure should be considered abnormal. Consult a physician following a suspected concussion.</p>	

*Material cited here is a result of work of the following group:
 Sports Concussion Program. University of Pittsburgh Medical Center - Center for Sports Medicine.
 Pittsburgh, PA. (Tel. 412-647-3555)*



MASSACHUSETTS
 GENERAL HOSPITAL

Sports Physical Therapy

175 Cambridge Street, Suite 470, Boston, MA 02114; Tel 617-643-9999