

Concussion

A concussion is a change in the way the brain works due to an injury. The symptoms of a concussion can be subtle. A concussion can occur without an athlete losing consciousness (passing out). It can occur when your head is hit with a projectile (ball), moving object, another player, contact with a stationary object (goalpost), or the ground.

A concussion can result in a headache (most common finding), balance problems, dizziness, nausea, feeling "foggy," or "dazed", seeing stars or flashing lights, double vision with or without sensitivity to light and noise, hearing problems or ringing in the ears, irritability, weakness and/or numbness anywhere in the body, and emotional changes.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a concussion include:

- Loss of consciousness
- Vomiting
- Poor coordination/balance
- Seizure
- Slow response to answering questions or follow directions
- Slurred speech
- Poor concentration
- Personality changes
- Inappropriate emotions or playing behavior
- Confusion/disorientation or amnesia

Diagnosis

The diagnosis is made with a careful history of the injury and a physical exam. The exam includes questions and tasks that test memory, balance, reaction time and attention. If you are referred to a neurosurgeon, diagnostic studies might be performed, such as a computed tomography (CT) or MRI, but not everyone with a concussion or head injury needs a scan of the brain, and patients with concussions usually have normal scans.

Treatment

Treatment is resting the brain. This means no video games, television, computers, and text messaging. You may have to delay school projects and tests, or take time off from school. All sports activities should be avoided (not just those with a risk of head injury) until you are permitted to play sports. There are specific protocols to be followed to determine when and how you should return to activities.