

Concussion – Parents’ Guide



Definition

A concussion is an injury resulting from trauma to the brain resulting in a change in how the brain functions¹⁻³. Any hit or fall causing the brain to ‘shake’ within the skull can lead to a concussion. These traumatic events can be from a collision between two players, hitting an obstacle (such as the ground or goal post) or even from a hit to the body causing the head to suddenly change direction. Descriptions such as “dings” and “getting one’s bell rung” should be avoided, as they minimize the injury severity¹. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 3.5 million sports-and-related concussions occur each year in the United States⁴.

Signs and Symptoms

- Loss of consciousness
- Seizure or convulsion
- Balance Problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- More emotional
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Fatigue or low energy
- Nervous or anxious
- “Don’t feel right”
- Difficulty remembering
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Feeling slowed down
- “Pressure in head”
- Blurred Vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Amnesia
- Feeling in a “fog”
- Neck pain
- Sensitivity to noise
- Difficulty concentrating

Zackery Lystedt Law

Seattle United follows the Zackery Lystedt Law (House Bill 1824), signed in 2009. This law requires:

1. An informed consent must be signed by parents and youth athletes acknowledging the risk of head injury prior to practice or competition.
2. A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in practice or a game must be removed from play at that time.

3. A youth athlete who has been removed from the play for a head injury or suspected concussion must receive written clearance from a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion before returning to play

Below we have given some recommendations for you and your child once they have sustained a concussion. Please keep in mind that youth athletes may have a more prolonged recovery and may have a longer return to play progression ¹⁻³.

Once you have taken your child home, it is okay to:

- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) for headaches
- Use ice pack on head/neck as needed for comfort
- Go to sleep
- Rest (no strenuous activity or sport)

There is no need to:

- Check your child's eyes with a flashlight
- Wake up frequently (unless otherwise instructed)
- Test reflexes

Other considerations:

- Do not allow your child to drive a car while having symptoms
- Do not allow your child to engage in physical activity (exercise, sports) until approved by a health care provider
- Limit strenuous mental activity (school, homework, computer games) until feeling better
- Limit TV/computer screen exposure

When to go to ER

If any of the following develop, the athlete should be taken to the emergency room:

- New headache or headache gets worse
- Persistent or increasing neck pain
- Becomes drowsy or can't be woken up
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Behaving unusually, seems confused
- Has seizures
- Has weakness, numbness or tingling (arms, legs, face)
- Is unsteady walking or standing
- Has slurred speech
- Has difficulty understanding speech or directions
- Pupils become unequal in size
- Repeated vomiting

What to expect

If your child has sustained an injury to their head, you should make an appointment with his or her primary care physician as soon as possible. We have also provided some names of local Seattle clinics that specialize in sports-related concussion below.

Seattle United mandates that all athletes who are pulled out of sport due to a suspected concussion must receive permission from a licensed healthcare professional (LHP) in order to resume play. The LHP will determine the acute management following the concussion and develop a plan for your child to return to sport safely. It may be possible that your LHP recommends your child stay home from school for a couple of days until some/all of the symptoms resolve. This will allow time for your child to heal without extra mental stress. You can also expect that there will be a slow progression back to full sport activity. This return to sport progression will only begin once all of your child's symptoms have resolved. It may take up to a week once the symptoms have fully resolved until your child is back to full participation. Again, this is to allow your child to recover without the possibility of new head trauma.

Seattle Area Concussion Clinics

University of Washington Sports Medicine Center at Husky Stadium

3800 Montlake Blvd NE

Phone: 206 520 5000

University of Washington Sports Concussion Program at Harborview Medical Center

908 Jefferson Street

Phone: 206 744 8000

Seattle Children's Sports Concussion Program

4800 Sandpoint Way NE

Phone: 206 987 2109

References

1. Broglio SP, Cantu RC, Guskiewicz KM, et. al. National Athletic Trainers' Association position statement: management of sport concussion. *J Athletic Training*.2014;(2):245-265.
2. Harmon KG, Drezner JA, Gammons M, et. al. American Medical Society for Sports Medicine position statement: concussion in sport. *Br J Sport Med*. 2013;(1):15-26.
3. McCrory P, Meeuwisse WH, Aubry M, et. al. Consensus statement on concussion in sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich, November 2012. *Br J Sports Med*. 2013;47(4):250-8.

4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Sports-related recurrent brain injuries-United States. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 1997; 46(10):224-227. Available at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046702.htm.