



# Concussion Handout

## *For sport club participants with a suspected concussion*

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury with both physical and functional components. It is caused by a blow to the head/face/body, a rapid twisting motion or whiplash that causes the brain to move quickly within the skull.

## Signs & Symptoms

*Signs: observable clues witnessed by others*

- Physical
  - Dazed or vacant look
  - Decreased playing ability
  - Facial injury following head trauma
  - Grabbing or clutching the head
  - Lying motionless on the ground or slow to get up
  - Poor coordination or balance
- Cognitive
  - Confusion
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Easily distracted
  - Slow reaction/response time
- Emotional/Behavioral
  - Strange or inappropriate reactions

*Symptoms: feelings and sensations reported by the person*

- Physical
  - Blurred or double vision
  - Dizziness or problems with balance
  - Fatigue or feeling tired
  - Feeling "off" or not right
  - Headache or feeling pressure in the head
  - Neck pain
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Ringing in the ears
  - Seeing stars or flashes of light
- Cognitive
  - Sensitivity to light or noise
  - Trouble falling asleep
- Cognitive
  - Confusion
  - Difficulty concentrating or remembering
  - Feeling dazed or "in a fog"
  - Slowed down, fatigue, low energy
- Emotional/Behavioral
  - Irritable, sad, more emotional than usual
  - Nervous, anxious, depressed

*Any participant who sustains a significant blow to the head, face, neck, or body followed by ANY one or a combination of concussion signs or symptoms should be removed from participation and evaluated for a concussion by a medical professional. It is not necessary for a person to exhibit all or even most of the common signs & symptoms to have a concussion.*

*Some individuals will exhibit or experience signs and/or symptoms right away, while for others it may take 24-28 hours, and sometimes longer, for the injury to be noticed by those experiencing it or those around them.*

## Red Flags: Call 911

Call 911 if one or more of the following red flag signs or symptoms are present:

- Neck pain or tenderness – directly on the spine
- Double vision or slurred speech
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Severe or significantly worsening headache
- Seizure or convulsions
- Loss of consciousness
- Very drowsy or deteriorating conscious state
- Vomiting directly related to a head injury
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative

## Next Steps

- **Don't hide it.** When in doubt, sit it out! Tell your friends, roommates, and/or teammates. If you have ANY of the above symptoms you should not participate in physical activity, including recreational activities, until you have been evaluated by a medical professional. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself.
- **Get checked out.** You are receiving this handout because you may have a suspected concussion. You need to contact the Rec Sports athletic trainer, Kylie Lewis, at [kewis@uwlax.edu](mailto:kewis@uwlax.edu) within 12 hours of the incident.
- **Take time to recover.** If you have a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. The decision about return to physical activity is a medical decision that must be made by a licensed healthcare provider.

## We recommend those with a suspected concussion should NOT:

- Be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours).
- Drink alcohol or use recreational, prescription, or over the counter pain relievers, drugs, or tobacco.
- Drive a motor vehicle/bike until cleared to do so by a licensed medical professional.

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