



Edge Physical Therapy / Winooski High School Concussion Information Sheet

A blow to the head can disrupt the normal function of the brain. Doctors often call this type of injury a concussion. They may describe these injuries as “mild” because concussions are usually not life threatening. However, the effects of concussions can be serious.

After a concussion, some people lose consciousness or are “knocked out” for a short time, but this is not always the case. The majority of concussions occur without losing consciousness. The intensity of a “hit” does not always correspond to the presence of or the severity of a concussion. The most common signs/symptoms of a concussion are headache, dizziness, and confusion. Some symptoms appear right away, while others may appear days or weeks after the concussion.

The brain is very complex. Every brain injury is different and every person’s recovery is different. Studies have shown that young athletes take longer to recover from mild head injuries than college or professional athletes. Most people with mild head injuries recover fully, but it can take time. Symptoms can last for days, weeks, or longer.

Normal Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion

Low-grade headaches	Mild neck pain
Feeling light-headed or dizzy	Lack of energy
Sensitivity to sound and light	Severe mood changes: sad, angry
Blurred vision	Difficulty balancing
ringing in the ears	Nausea
Slowness in thinking, acting, speaking, reading	Memory loss
Getting easily confused	Fatigue
Difficulty paying attention or concentrating	Forgetfulness (mild amnesia)

Danger Signs

In very rare cases, along with a concussion dangerous bleeding may occur inside the brain. This is a very serious and life-threatening condition that requires immediate medical attention. Contact your Doctor or Emergency Department right away if you notice any of the following symptoms:

- Severe headache that **gets worse**
- Weakness, numbness, or severely decreased coordination
- Vomiting

- Unusual drowsiness (Cannot be awakened)
- One pupil larger than the other
- Convulsions or seizures
- Slurred speech or inability to formulate/find words.
- Severe agitation, confusion, or restlessness
- Unconsciousness (pass out, black out)

Although rare, it is very important to regularly monitor the concussed patient and look for these symptoms as they may not show-up for hours or days after the initial injury.

Recovery

Recovery varies from person to person. Although most people recover successfully, the time it takes depends on many factors, including but not limited to: severity, injury location, patient age, general health, and history of concussions.

Rest is very important after a concussion. It allows time for the brain to heal. This includes physical AND mental rest. Patients and caregivers must be extremely patient because healing takes time. The medical team, the parents, the athlete, and the school teachers/councilors must work together to determine appropriate levels of school work.

While healing is occurring, the concussed person must be very careful to avoid anything that could cause another blow to the head. Receiving a second concussion before fully healing from the first can significantly alter/length healing time.

Concussed athletes must be evaluated and followed by an Athletic Trainer. It is often recommended that people with a concussion be seen by their Doctor as well. Concussed athletes must progress through the return-to-play protocol in place under the direction of the Athletic Trainer.

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