



BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION

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Concussion in Sports Consensus Statement

CONCUSSION – definition and features

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI), induced by mechanical forces that immediately disrupt the normal functioning of the brain.

When playing sports, if there is any doubt that a player might have sustained a concussion, the player should be removed from the game or practice. Never participate in physical activity if *any* sign or symptom of MTBI is present.

All concussions should be evaluated by knowledgeable health professionals to measure severity, monitor progress over time and properly manage the injury. Resolution of clinical and cognitive symptoms often occurs spontaneously, typically following a sequential course.

The mechanical trauma that causes a concussion may be either a direct blow to the head, face, and neck or an indirect blow elsewhere on the body that transmits an “impulsive” force to the head.

Concussion symptoms usually appear immediately, although they can present later, and affect a wide array of mental functions. A stunned, confused state is a hallmark of MTBI. Loss of consciousness may also occur; however, most concussions do NOT involve loss of consciousness. Memory loss, dizziness, emotional instability, disturbances of equilibrium, vision, and cognitive functions, as well as headache, nausea and vomiting are common symptoms.

Concussion results in immediate chemical changes within the nerve cells of the brain, which usually return to normal over several days or weeks. Neuroimaging studies typically show grossly normal anatomic structures.

A concussion may have widely varied clinical consequences (from mild to severe); like all injuries, however, it is imperative that the injured body part be afforded adequate time to heal. Resting the brain must not only involve ceasing physical activity for a period of time, but also should include a break from challenging cognitive activity as well.

Concussions are not simply “a blow to the head”; as brain injuries, concussions must always be taken seriously.

This definition has been developed by a committee of professionals as part of an on-going effort to bring together a statewide partnership on concussion awareness and prevention in youth sports.

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WWW.SPORTSCONCUSSION.COM

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