

Heads Up : Concussions in Sports

Important: This sheet has been provided to you by University Recreation & Wellness for information purposes only and should not be considered a replacement for a medical examination or diagnosis.

Adapted from: "Concussion: A Fact Sheet for Student-Athletes" (2009). Retrieved from http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/health_safety/ConFactSheetsa.pdf on January 12, 2011

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.
- Can change the way your brain normally works.
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport or recreational activity.
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged" or "had your bell rung."

All concussions are serious. A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities (such as playing video games, working on a computer, studying, driving, or exercising). Most people with a concussion get better, but it is important to give your brain time to heal.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury.

Concussion symptoms include:

- Amnesia.
- Confusion.
- Headache.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Balance problems or dizziness.
- Double or fuzzy vision.
- Sensitivity to light or noise.
- Nausea (feeling that you might vomit).
- Feeling sluggish, foggy or groggy.
- Feeling unusually irritable.
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays, facts, meeting times).
- Slowed reaction time.
- Exercise or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games may cause concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness) to reappear or get worse.

What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

- **Don't hide it.** Tell your friends, roommates, and/or teammates. If you have any of the above symptoms you should not participate in physical activity until you have been evaluated by a medical professional.
- **Get checked out.** Contact your primary care physician, go to the nearest hospital, or contact the University Health Center if you experience any of the symptoms listed above. You can reach the Health Center at **301-314-8184**
- **Take time to recover.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a repeat concussion. In rare cases, repeat concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death. Severe brain injury can change your whole life. It may be necessary to talk with your professors or employer about the time you will need to recover.

Take only those drugs that your health care professional has approved.

Do not drink alcoholic beverages until your health care professional says you are well enough. Alcohol and other drugs can slow your recovery and put you at further risk of injury.

Emergency Numbers to Know

UMD Police: 301-405-3333

Or 911

University Health Center

Bldg 140 Campus Drive

Appointment line:

301-314-8184

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit: **www.cdc.gov/injury**