

RHS CONCUSSION INFORMATION AND PROTOCOL

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a temporary disruption of normal brain function. Concussions can be caused by a single blow to the head, by a whiplash type mechanism, and by multiple blows to the head. A concussion can occur even if the head is not hit.

Concussions are injuries that affect normal brain function. Concussions do not usually involve an actual structural injury to the brain that can be seen by CT or MRI scans.

Are concussions serious?

YES! All concussions are serious. Initially, determining severity is not critical. The severity of a concussion is determined after the athlete has returned to full activity. The longer the athlete is symptomatic the more severe the concussion is considered to be.

What are some signs and symptoms that you should watch for during the first few hours and days following a concussion?

If any of the following signs or symptoms develops please take the person to the nearest emergency room immediately:

- A persistently severe or worsening headache
- Persistent confusion or short term memory loss (such as the person asking the same questions over and over)
- Increased or persistent dizziness or inability to maintain balance
- Persistent or increased blurry vision or inability to focus
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling in the arms, hands, legs, or feet
- Incoherent speech, changes in personality (aggressive, emotional)
- Vomiting
- Decreasing alertness or inability to wake the person

Is it OK to let the person sleep?

Yes. However, if you note any of the symptoms listed above that are worsening it would be best to seek medical attention and let the medical personnel advise you further

Can I give any medications for the headache?

Tylenol is the medication of choice. Please follow the directions listed on the medication bottle. Please DO NOT use blood thinning medication such as Ibuprofen, Aleve, Aspirin, etc.

When can the athlete return to sports activities?

As long as the person has any symptoms of a concussion they should not participate in strenuous physical activity. It is extremely important that the athlete be honest about any symptoms they may be having. Returning to sports before the concussion is fully resolved increases the chance of sustaining another concussion. Often, the next concussion can be more severe and require a lengthy recovery period.

The initial symptoms of a concussion can persist for several days to a week or so. Most concussions resolve and the athlete returns to play in about 10-14 days. Occasionally, symptoms can persist for longer periods of time. Referral to an appropriate medical professional will be made as the situation requires.

At Roseburg High School we use a return to participation protocol with all concussed athletes. The protocol goes as follows:

1. Post-Injury ImPACT Test:

- An ImPACT post-injury test will be done within 72 hours of suspected concussion
- The ImPACT test (Immediate Post-concussion Assessment and Cognitive Test) is a computer tool that is used to assess the athlete's attention span, memory, accuracy, problem solving, and reaction time.

Physical and Cognitive Rest: The athlete is on a no practice, no weight lifting restriction.

- Cognitive rest also includes restricting time spent using the computer, texting, games (Xbox, PlayStation, etc), reading, and watching TV
- The general rule of thumb at this stage is no activities that elevate the heart rate and the idea of "if you are using your eyes you are not resting your brain" apply until all symptoms have resolved.

2. Return to Learn

- If the athlete is having issues with concentration, memory, headaches, or visual problems then his/her teachers will be contacted to make academic modifications until there is a resolution of these issues.

3. A second post-injury ImPACT test will be done when the athlete's symptoms have resolved completely.

- Once the athlete's ImPACT score is back to baseline, symptom free, and back to school full time, their ImPACT report will be sent to Dr. Pandit, a Concussion Specialist for interpretation and medical clearance.
- Once medical clearance is obtained, the athlete can start the 5 day gradual return to participation process.

**** The ImPACT test is not a "stand alone" test that is used to clear an athlete for return to sports activities. It is used as one part of a return to play decision.**

4. Gradual Return To Participation Process:

Step 1: Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No Weight-lifting.

Step 2: Running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.

Step 3: Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight-training can Begin.

Step 4: Full contact practice or training.

Step 5: Game play.

**** An athlete MUST be symptom free in order to move onto the next step of the return to play protocol. If symptoms arise during any stage of the protocol, the athlete must stop activity and rest for 24 hours until beginning activity again.**

For any questions or concerns contact Lindsey Cockreham, RHS Athletic Trainer

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