

# McCann Technical School Athletics

## Concussion Fact Sheet for Parents

### What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a blow to the head or body that makes the brain move rapidly, leading to chemical changes and possible brain cell damage. This can affect thinking, learning, emotions, behavior, and sleep, with symptoms being most severe immediately after the injury.

### Concussion Symptoms?

Concussion symptoms are what a child feels after an injury, while signs are what others observe. Symptoms vary by person, can change during recovery, and are typically most severe 1-2 days after the injury. They may differ based on the child's age and might not appear immediately, making detection harder in young children or those with disabilities. Parents should monitor their child closely, noting any changes and sharing worsening symptoms with a healthcare provider.

#### Symptoms reported by the athlete

- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Dizziness or balance issues
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Headaches
- Nausea or vomiting (early stage)
- Vision problems
- Difficulty with thinking, memory, and concentration
- Mental foginess or feeling slowed down
- Emotional changes: anxiety, irritability, sadness
- Sleep disturbances: changes in sleep patterns, trouble falling asleep

#### Signs observed by the parent/guardian

- Appearing dazed, stunned, or confused
- Difficulty remembering or concentrating
- Slower response to questions
- Increased clumsiness or unsteadiness
- Vomiting immediately after the injury without other causes
- Slowed reaction times
- Changes in mood, behavior, or personality

[www.cdc.gov/heads-up](http://www.cdc.gov/heads-up)

Source: CDC Heads Up



## Danger Signs

If your child or teen shows any of the following worsening symptoms, take them to the emergency department immediately:

- Uneven pupil size
- Extreme drowsiness or inability to wake up
- Persistent worsening headache
- Weakness, numbness, or lack of coordination
- Frequent vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Seizures or convulsions
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Growing confusion, agitation, or restlessness
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness (even briefly)

## If you think your child has a concussion

- Seek medical attention immediately – a healthcare professional will assess the concussion's severity and advise when it's safe to resume activities.
- Keep your child out of play – allow time for healing; don't let your child return to play until cleared by a healthcare professional to avoid the risk of a second, more serious concussion.
- Inform the coach of previous concussions – make sure the coach is aware of any past concussions, even from other sports or activities.

## How to help your child prevent concussions and brain injuries

- Make sure your child follows the coach's safety rules, practices good sportsmanship, and wears the appropriate protective equipment.
- Equipment should fit well and be properly maintained.
- A helmet is essential to reduce the risk of serious head injuries, but remember, helmets can't prevent concussions. Even with a helmet, it's important to avoid head impacts.

## How can my child return to school after a concussion?

After a concussion, children and teens may need rest breaks, shorter school days, extended time for tests and assignments, help with schoolwork, and reduced screen time. Communicate with teachers, school staff, and healthcare providers to ensure proper support, which can be gradually reduced as symptoms improve.

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