



MaxHealth
Family & Sports Medicine

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So you've had a **CONCUSSION**. Now what?

What is a concussion?

A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head or caused by the head striking something else such as the ground. A concussion typically causes the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of brain function that resolves spontaneously with time. However, occasionally there can be a more significant problem, and it is important that the symptoms from every concussion be monitored by your athletic trainers and team physicians. Concussions usually do not cause structural damage to the brain (eg: a CT scan of the brain will be normal after a concussion). **A concussion can occur whether or not a person is “knocked out.”** When you suffer a concussion, you may have problems with concentration and memory, notice an inability to focus, feel fatigued, have a headache, or feel nauseated. Bright lights and loud noises may bother you. You may feel irritable, be more emotional, or have other symptoms. It may be difficult to study, attend class, use the computer, or to write text messages.

What should I watch out for?

After evaluation by your athletic trainer and/or team physician it may be determined that you are safe to go home. If your symptoms are severe or are worsening you may be sent to the Emergency Department for further evaluation. **If you are sent home, you should not be left alone. A responsible adult should accompany you.**

Symptoms from your concussion may persist when you are sent home but should not worsen, nor should new symptoms develop.

You should watch for symptoms including:

- Increasing headaches
- Increasing nausea or vomiting
- Increasing confusion
- Garbled/slurred speech



- Unusual sleepiness or difficulty being awakened
- Trouble using your arms or legs
- Convulsions or seizures

If you notice any of these problems or have any other problems that appears worse as compared to how you felt at the time you left the athletic trainer/team physician, immediately call 911 or have someone take you to the closest emergency department. Please also call your athletic trainer/ team physician if at all possible.

Is it ok to go to sleep?

A concussion can make a player feel drowsy or tired. As long as you are not getting worse, as noted above, it is alright for you to sleep. The responsible adult who is accompanying you should wake you up every 2-3 hours to make sure you can be awoken and that your symptoms are not worsening.

Do I need a CT scan or an MRI?

If the athletic trainer/team physician have determined that you are able to go home after the practice or game, these types of diagnostic tests are not necessary. If you are sent to the hospital with a concern for a more complicated injury (ie: skull fracture, bleeding inside the skull) a CT scan or MRI examination may be considered. If your symptoms linger for several days then these examinations may also be considered by your physician.

May I take something for pain?

Do not take any medications unless your athletic trainer/team physician has told you to do so. Normally we do not advise anything stronger than Tylenol and ask you to avoid such things as aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or any other anti-inflammatory medication. We also ask that you do not consume any alcohol and avoid caffeine and any other stimulants. If you are taking any supplements, we would suggest you discontinue the use of them as well. The team physician will determine when you can restart medications and supplements.