

Valley Catholic High School Sports Medicine Concussion Information Sheet

What is a concussion?

Concussion is defined as mild traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. Each concussion is unique and can cause multiple symptoms. Some symptoms will appear immediately, while others may develop over the following days or weeks. Symptoms may be subtle and are often difficult to fully recognize. Common symptoms include headache, dizziness, sensitivity to light and noise, mood changes, and difficulty with concentration and memory. Other symptoms may also be present.

What should I watch for?

If the athlete is sent home, they should not be left alone. A responsible adult should stay with them to monitor their symptoms and help ensure they are resting. If any of the following appear you should contact your physician or go to your hospital emergency room immediately.

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Progressively worsening headache
- Abnormal sleepiness or grogginess
- Unusual mental confusion or disorientation
- Dizziness or loss of coordination
- Convulsions or seizure
- Unusual vision difficulties
- Unequal pupil size or slow / absent reaction to light
- Slurred speech
- Abnormal emotional behaviors

Are painkillers ok to use?

Normally, nothing stronger than Tylenol is advised. The use of aspirin, Advil, Motrin, and Aleve should be avoided as they are blood thinners and may increase bleeding. Avoiding caffeine and other stimulants is also recommended.

Is a CT needed?

The need for a CT is most often determined by a physician in the emergency room. Typically, with a concussion, a CT will appear normal. If you are not sent to the emergency room, a CT is likely not needed.

When do we see the doctor?

Per OSAA Guidelines and State Law, any athlete with a concussion with needs written medical clearance before they can return to competition. If the athlete has a history of concussion we would encourage you to see the provider who has previously treated them. If there is no previous history of concussion, you can follow up with the athlete's regular doctor or we can provide names of doctors who are experienced with managing concussions. If at any time during the recovery process you have questions or concerns about the athlete's progress, please do not hesitate to check in with the athlete's doctor or other health care provider.

Is sleeping all night ok?

Before sleeping, evaluate symptoms to check their progression. If they are improving, it is believed sleeping without being woken up is all right.

Their pupils seem normal; do they still have a concussion?

Pupil reaction is observed during most concussion evaluations. Typically, athletes with a concussion will have normal pupil reaction that matches in both eyes. This is tested not to determine the presence of a concussion, but rather to rule out a more serious brain injury.

What about school?

If our athletic trainer knows about the concussion, communication will be sent to the athlete's teachers and counselor informing them of the concussion. Current research has shown the need for complete physical and cognitive rest. While it is important to be at school, we encourage parents to evaluate the athlete's symptoms and then determine if being at school or staying at home to rest is the best course of action. Often when students come to school while still experiencing moderate to severe symptoms, their symptoms will worsen during the course of the day, resulting in a need to be picked up from school. Please remember that half days are also an option.

What about ImPACT testing?

The ImPACT test is a computer based test designed to help monitor recovery after a concussion. It tests both short and long term memory, reaction times, pattern recognition and impulse control. After a concussion, scores are compared to baseline scores for comparison.

Concussion - Private School Informed Consent

Excerpt Executive Board Policies – Concussion Management (Fall 2014)

B. "Member Private School's Responsibilities (Jenna's Law, ORS 417.875)

1) Concussion – Private School Informed Consent Form: On an annual basis prior to participation, private schools shall require each student and at least one parent or legal guardian of the student to sign the Concussion – Private School Informed Consent form acknowledging the receipt of information regarding symptoms and warning signs of concussions. Private schools shall maintain a copy of each student's signed form on file for review at any time by OSAA staff.

2) Suspected or Diagnosed Concussion: Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion following an observed or suspected blow to the head or body, or who has been diagnosed with a concussion, shall not be permitted to return to that athletic contest or practice, or any other athletic contest or practice on that same day.

3) Return to Participation: Until an athlete who has exhibited signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion following an observed or suspected blow to the head or body or who suffered a concussion is no longer experiencing signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, and a medical release form signed by an appropriate Health Care Professional (Physician (MD), Physician's Assistant (PA), Doctor of Osteopathic (DO) licensed by the Oregon State Board of Medicine, nurse practitioner licensed by the Oregon State Board of Nursing, or Psychologist licensed by the Oregon Board of Psychologist Examiners) is obtained, the athlete shall not be permitted to return to athletic activity."