



**Concussion Signs and Symptoms Information Sheet**  
**(Coach/Manager/Board Member Copy)**

**What is a Concussion?**

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

**Did you know?**

- Most concussions occur *without* loss of consciousness.
- Athletes who have, at any point in their lives, had a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion.
- Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults.

Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks following the injury.

If an athlete reports one or more symptoms of concussion listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, the athlete should be kept out of play the day of the injury and until an approved health care provider\* says the athlete is symptom-free and it is safe to return to play.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETES
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or “pressure” in head
Is confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting
Forgets an instruction	Balanced problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double or blurry vision
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise
Loses consciousness, even briefly	Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes	Concentration or memory problems
Can’t recall events <i>prior</i> to hit or fall	Confusion
Can’t recall events <i>after</i> hit or fall	Just not “feeling right,” or “feeling down”

**What are the Concussion Danger Signs?**

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body if the athlete exhibits any of the following danger signs:

- Has one pupil larger than the other;
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened;
- Has a headache that does not diminish or go away;
- Has weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination;
- Has repeated vomiting or nausea;
- Has slurred speech;
- Has convulsions or seizures;
- Unable to recognize people or places;
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated;
- Demonstrates unusual behavior;
- Loses consciousness (even though brief it is serious)

**Remember:**  
 Concussions affect individuals differently. While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, or weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

## **Prevention and Preparation**

Insist that safety comes first. To help minimize the risks for concussion or other serious brain injuries:

- Ensure the athletes follow the rules for safety and the rules of your sport.
- Encourage the athletes to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Wearing some form of protective head gear can help in minimizing some injuries sustained from head to head or head to goal contact. However, head gear does nothing to prevent the brain from moving in the skull. There is no “concussion-proof” head gear.
- Assist in educating the parents and players on TSSA’s commitment to Concussion Education and Safety.
- Ensure that each parent/athlete has signed the Parent/Athlete Information Sheet at the start of the season and prior to any practice or competition.
- Have an action plan in place that you follow when you suspect a player to have the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

## **Action Plan**

1. ***Remove the athlete from play*** – Look for signs of a concussion if you athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. When in doubt, sit them out!
2. ***Ensure the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional.*** \*- Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods they can use to assess the severity of a concussion. As a coach, record any information that may assist the health care professional in the assessment after the injury.
3. ***Inform the athlete’s parents or legal guardian-*** Let them know about the possible concussion and give them the ***Heads Up Fact Sheet*** for parents. This fact sheet can help parents to monitor the athlete for the signs and symptoms that appear or get worse once the athlete is at home or returns to school.
4. ***Keep the athlete out of play-*** An athlete should be removed from play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health care provider\* says the athlete is symptom-free and is safe to return to play. After you remove an athlete with a suspected concussion from practice or competition, the decision about return to play is a medical decision.

## **Gradual Return to Play of Concussed Athlete**

An athlete should return to practice or competition under the supervision of an appropriate health care professional. When available, be sure to work closely with any certified athletic trainers. Below are five (5) steps you and the health care professional should follow to help safely return an athlete to play. Please remember this is a gradual process. These steps should not be completed in one day, but instead over weeks or months.

***Baseline:*** Athletes should not have any concussion symptoms. Athletes should only progress to the next step if they do not have any symptoms at the current step.

***Step 1:*** Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete’s heart rate. This means about 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking, or light jogging. No weightlifting at this point.

***Step 2:*** Continue with activities to increase an athlete’s heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, moderate-intensity weightlifting (reduced time and/or reduced weight from their typical routine).

***Step 3:*** Add heavy non-contact physical activity such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, and regular weightlifting routine and/or non-contact sport-specific drills (in three planes of movement).

***Step 4:*** Athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in controlled practice.

***Step 5:*** Athlete may return to competition.

If an athlete’s symptoms come back or they get new symptoms when becoming more active at any step, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing too hard. The athlete should stop these activities and the athlete’s health care provider should be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, the athlete should begin at the previous step.

## **Why should an Athlete or Coach Report Symptoms?**

If an athlete has a concussion, their brain needs time to heal. While an athlete’s brain is healing, they are more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover. In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to one’s brain. They (concussions) can even be fatal.

***\*NOTE: Health Care Provider means a Tennessee licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician, or clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training.***



**Concussion Acknowledgement Form**  
**(Coach/Manager/Board Member)**

**MUST** be signed and returned to the member club/association that is affiliated with Tennessee State Soccer Association (TSSA) prior to participation in practice or competition.

Coach/Manager/Board Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Initials</b>
<b>I have read the Concussion Signs and Symptoms Information Sheet.</b>	
<b>I will not allow any athlete exhibiting signs and symptoms consistent with concussion to return to play or competition on the same day.</b>	
<b>I understand and have been made aware that a concussion is a brain injury.</b>	
<b>I realize that I cannot see a concussion, but I might notice some of the signs in an athlete right away. Other signs and symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury.</b>	
<b>If I suspect an athlete has a concussion, I am responsible for removing them from activity and referring them to a medical professional trained in concussion management.</b>	
<b>Athletes need written clearance from a health care provider* to return to play or practice following a concussion.</b>	
<b>I will not allow any athlete to return to play or competition if I suspect that they have received a blow to the head or body that resulted in signs or symptoms consistent with concussion.</b>	
<b>Following a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. I understand that a concussed athlete is more likely to suffer another concussion or more serious brain injury if return to play or competition occurs before concussion symptoms go away completely.</b>	
<b>In some cases, a repeat concussion can cause serious, long lasting problems or even death.</b>	
<b>I have read the concussion signs and symptoms on the Concussion Information Sheet and I understand the importance of Concussion Education for Coaches.</b>	

*\*NOTE: Health Care Provider means a Tennessee licensed medical doctor, osteopathic physician, or clinical neuropsychologist with concussion training.*

Coach/Manager/Board Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_