Concussion Facts

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a blow to the body that causes the head to rapidly move back and forth can cause a concussion. Terms often used in sports, such as “getting your bell rung,” or a “ding,” can be serious concussions.

What to do

- Immediately stop activities with contact risk. WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!
- Notify parents, teachers and all coaches/trainers if the athlete sustains a blow to the head or develops the signs and symptoms of a concussion.
- Get the athlete evaluated by a licensed health care provider (LCHP) trained in diagnosing and managing concussions. CA Assembly Bill 25 states that any child who is suspected of suffering a concussion cannot return to play until cleared by a LCHP trained in concussions, including pediatricians, neurologists, neuropsychologists and licensed athletic trainers. This will provide the best plan for a fast and full recovery.
- Give the athlete time to get better. The brain needs time to heal after a concussion! Avoid major cognitive demands in the first day or two, but the athlete can do tasks that don’t worsen symptoms. It is better for an athlete to miss one game than the entire season!

Symptoms

Symptoms often begin shortly after an injury, but in some cases may not appear until hours later. Symptoms may worsen over time.

- Headache
- Confusion/disorientation
- Dizziness
- Memory loss
- Nausea
- Blurry vision
- Impaired balance
- Light or noise sensitivity
- Vomiting
- Problems focusing
- Personality changes
- Behavioral changes
- Slowed responsiveness
- Sleep disturbance

Danger Signs

In rare cases, a sports related brain injury can be more serious. If you see any of these signs or the athlete reports any of these symptoms, take the athlete to the doctor or emergency room immediately:

- Worsening severe headache
- Seizures
- Repeated vomiting
- Severe drowsiness
- Inability to recognize people
- Increasing confusion
- Weakness/numbness in arms or legs
- Unusual irritability
- Major personality changes
- Loss of consciousness
# Return-to-Play Protocol

Plan to spend 24-48 hours at each stage. Do not advance if symptoms return!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>APPROPRIATE ACTIVITY</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>No activity — physical and cognitive rest to be limited by symptoms. If it makes you feel worse, don’t do it.</td>
<td>Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Light aerobic exercise — walking, swimming or stationary cycling. Keep heart rate under 70% of maximum. No resistance training.</td>
<td>Increase heart rate and blood pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Aerobic+movement — for example, running drills in soccer, skating drills in hockey. No head impact activities!</td>
<td>Add movement and balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Aerobic+movement+thinking: Non-contact training drills — more complex drills. For example, passing drills in football, soccer and hockey. May begin resistance training. No head impact activities!</td>
<td>Add cognitive load</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Full-contact practice — after medical clearance, return to normal practice activities.</td>
<td>Restore confidence. Assessment of recovery and skills by trainers and coaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Return to play — normal game play.</td>
<td>Fully recovered</td>
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</tbody>
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**UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program & Concussion Clinic**

For more information about the UCLA Steve Tisch BrainSPORT Program please visit: [https://www.uclahealth.org/brainsport](https://www.uclahealth.org/brainsport)

(310) 825-0867 Appointments and referrals
(310) 301-5391 Fax
concussioncare@mednet.ucla.edu

Clinic Locations:

**Santa Monica**
1131 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 202
Santa Monica, California 90401

**Westwood**
200 UCLA Medical Plaza, Suite 265
Los Angeles, CA 90095

Edie & Lew Wasserman Building
300 Stein Plaza, Suite 420
Los Angeles, CA 90095