

CONCUSSION INFORMATION For Parents and Coaches

The University Hospitals Concussion Management Program is a multidisciplinary collaborative effort comprising the UH Neurological Institute, UH Primary Care Institute, UH Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, UH Rehabilitation Services and UH Drusinsky Sports Medicine Institute, as well as other adult and pediatric specialty providers.

To schedule an appointment with one of our concussion management experts at a location near you, please call **216-983-PLAY (7529)**.



BE PREPARED

Understand a Concussion

Parents, coaches and referees should all understand what a concussion is, how to identify it, and what to do if you suspect a concussion.

What is a concussion?

It is a traumatic brain injury where a blow to the head, neck or body results in forces on the brain. This leads to a range of clinical symptoms (headache, dizziness, confusion, etc.) and signs. A concussion may result in a loss of consciousness but often it does not. MRI and CT scans often cannot detect the small changes that occur in the brain as a result of concussions, especially mild ones.

For more information on concussion:

[cdc.gov/headsup](https://www.cdc.gov/headsup) | odh.ohio.gov/youthconcussions | UHhospitals.org/Concussion

Athletes engaging in contact sports, with a history of concussion

or with other complicating factors: Obtain baseline testing prior to sports season.

This could include brief screening measures (SCAT testing), a computerized concussion test (ImPACT or Sway), or a combination of computerized and tradition neurocognitive testing (hybrid battery of testing). These tests may be available through your school or athletic organization.

These can also be scheduled by calling **216-844-3422**.

AT THE TIME OF INJURY

What are signs and symptoms of concussion?

- Falling unprotected
- Lying motionless
- Loss of consciousness
- Headache
- Disorientation and confusion
- Dazed, blank, vacant look
- Seizure and convulsion
- Unsteady and dizzy
- Nausea & vomiting
- Change in vision
- Light and noise sensitivity

Ohio Youth Concussion Law:

Any person removed from practice or play because of a suspected concussion may not return that day and needs written clearance by a medical provider before return to play.

If a concussion is suspected, does the athlete have any of the following?

- Breathing problems
- Unconscious one minute or longer
- Neck pain, numbness or tingling
- Seizure
- Worsening headache
- Worsening confusion
- Numbness or tingling in arms or legs
- >1 episode of vomiting
- Deformity of the skull

YES

URGENT TRANSPORT TO HOSPITAL FOR EVALUATION

Emergency Department should not make return-to-play decision.

NO

Follow these steps:

- Remove from play
- Encourage rest and restrict physical/cognitive activity initially
- Limit exposure to loud noises/bright lights
- Monitor for change in symptoms
- Establish plan for physician evaluation

Make an appointment with doctor immediately.

- **Within 72 hours**, follow up with physician (e.g., pediatrician, primary care or sports medicine) for reassessment, recovery plan, possible school restriction and/or additional medical referrals
- Symptoms can worsen in the initial days after a concussion

IF ATHLETE HAS WORSENING CONDITIONS AT ANY TIME FOLLOWING CONCUSSION

Rapid physician referral or transport to ED

Symptoms include: Severe or worsening headache, vomiting two or more times, increasing confusion/irritability, seizure or weakness/numbness.

RECOVERY AND RETURN TO PLAY

During the initial days following injury:

1. Encourage brain rest, avoid additional injury, and encourage progressive return to normal activity once tolerated by:

- No activities that could cause other concussions (sports, bike riding, etc.) until cleared by a doctor
- Light activity, such as walking, is encouraged, with increased exercise after 48 hours
- Do not engage in strict rest or bed rest in a dark room – this worsens recovery
- Get a good night's sleep; no late nights
- You do not need to wake the athlete every hour

2. Avoid loud noises, bright lights, and overly stimulating activity by:

- Limit screen time, including TV, cell phones, video games and computers
- No loud music, including concerts and dances
- No sporting event attendance
- Limit any activity that requires extended periods of concentration to 20 – 30 minute blocks, such as homework or reading
- Stop any activity if symptoms worsen

Symptoms usually resolve in the initial weeks after injury. Light symptom exacerbation is not concerning, but if symptoms significantly worsen during or after an activity, stop and wait 24 hours before trying again.

Some athletes may require changes to school.

Possible changes include:

- A break from school and homework
- A progressive return to school (half days, regular breaks in a quiet space during the school day, etc.)
- Avoiding classes with loud noises (choir/band), bright lights (computers) or physical activity (PE)
- Temporary changes in schoolwork may be needed (no or reduced tests/homework, extra time on work, etc.)

NOTE: OHIO LAW REQUIRES WRITTEN CLEARANCE BEFORE RETURN TO PLAY

During recovery, seek a referral if any of the following apply:

- Symptoms persist for three weeks or more
- Symptoms are worsening or interfering with school
- If you've had two or more concussions
- History of ADHD/learning disorder, neurological disorder, depression/anxiety or other medical problem that can interfere with recovery

YES

Establish care with a qualified provider with experience in the evaluation and management of sports concussion.

NO

If athlete is seeking to return to play, the following criteria should be met:

- Symptom-free at rest and with activity
- Baseline testing is available, post-injury testing is read as normal by a qualified provider
- Returned to school full-time and requires no new accommodations
- No other injuries that would prevent return to play

IMPORTANT: ONE SIZE FITS ALL DOES NOT APPLY TO CONCUSSIONS

A concussion treatment plan is specific to the athlete and their symptoms. Not all recommendations may apply or additional recommendations may be needed.

Consult a qualified doctor for the best recovery plan.