

STRATEGIES FOR COACHES

Educate athletes and other parents about concussion:

- Before the first practice, talk to athletes and parents about the dangers of concussion and potential long-term consequences of concussion.
- Explain your concerns about concussion and your expectations of safe play.
- **Remind athletes to tell coaching staff right away if they suspect they have a concussion or that a teammate has a concussion.**
- Make sure to ask if an athlete has ever had a concussion and insist that your athletes are medically evaluated and are in good condition to participate.

What Should I do If a Concussion Occurs?

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion:

1. **Remove the athlete from play.** Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. **When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play**
2. **If any signs or symptoms of a concussion are present, suggest that the athlete get evaluated by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
 - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body
 - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
 - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
 - Any seizures immediately following the injury
 - Number of previous concussions (*if any*)
3. **Always inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.** Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems.

These are some SIGNS of concussion (what others can see in an injured athlete):	These are some of the more common SYMPTOMS of concussion (what an injured athlete feels):
Dazed or stunned appearance Change in the level of consciousness or awareness Confused about assignment Forgets plays Unsure of score, game, opponent Clumsy Answers more slowly than usual Shows behavior changes Loss of consciousness Asks repetitive questions or memory concerns	Headache Nausea Dizzy or unsteady Sensitive to light or noise Feeling mentally foggy Problems with concentration and memory Confused Slow