



Real Colorado Concussion Guidelines

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a mild injury to the brain that temporarily changes how the brain normally works. It is usually caused by a sudden blow or jolt to the head or body, although children often bump or hit their heads without getting a concussion. Sign and symptoms vary and are explained in more detail below. A person does NOT need to be knocked out or lose consciousness to have had a concussion. Other words or terms for a concussion include *mild traumatic brain injury* (mild TBI) and *mild closed-head injury*.

Initiate the Real Colorado Emergency Action Plan if there is loss of consciousness and/-or you suspect a neck injury. Do not move the athlete.

One or more of these signs and symptoms below may indicate that a concussion has occurred. Remember that concussions can also occur with no obvious signs or symptoms. All symptoms or physical signs should be taken seriously. Athletes, who experience these signs or symptoms after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body should be held out from play in all aspects of practices and games until cleared by a health care professional. Remember: **When in doubt, sit the player out.**

SYMPTOMS

Physical

Headache
Dizziness
Nausea
Balance Difficulties
Light or noise Sensitivity
Double Vision
Fatigue
Feeling Dazed/Stunned/Dinged
Ringing in the ears

Cognitive

Confusion
Amnesia
Disorientation
Poor Concentration
Memory Problems
Reasoning Difficulties
Does not "feel right"

Emotional

Irritability
Sadness
Nervousness
Depression
Moodiness
Sleep Disturbances

PHYSICAL SIGNS

Loss of/Impaired consciousness	Poor coordination or balance	Easily distracted
Poor coordination or balance	Slow to answer questions	Seizure
Inappropriate emotions	Vomiting	Slurred speech
Poor concentration	Inappropriate behavior	Personality changes
Decrease in performance	Vacant stare/Glassy eyed	
Slow to follow directions		

When a Concussion Occurs

1. **Remove the athlete from play.** Learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion in your players. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of a concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the player out.
2. **Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care provider.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of different methods they can use to assess the severity of a concussion. Notify the Real Colorado athletic trainer. The athletic trainer can assist you in managing this injury and acquiring appropriate health care evaluation.
3. **Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible concussion.** Make sure they know that the athlete must sit out and must be seen by a health care professional.
4. **Allow the athlete to return to play only with written permission from an appropriate health care professional. All athletes should complete a progressive return- to- play protocol before returning to sports activity.**

In the case of more serious head/neck injury, the athlete should be transported to the emergency room for evaluation and imaging if he/she experiences: loss of consciousness, suspected spine or neck injury, alteration or deterioration in physical condition or mental status, or an increase in symptoms.

If the athlete needs to be transported to the emergency department, an adult must accompany the injured athlete (i.e. coach, team supervisor, team manager) to the emergency department, unless the athlete's parent or guardian is present.

As a coach, you can play a key role in preventing concussions and managing them properly when they occur.

Teach athletes that it's not smart to play injured.

Sometimes players, parents, and others wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let athletes persuade you that they are safe to play after they have sustained any bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes signs or symptoms of a concussion.

According to Colorado Senate Bill 40, it is state law that all U12-U19 Real Colorado coaches participate in annual concussion training. This annual training will help you become more comfortable recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion and help you know what to do if one is suspected.

For more information or concussion clinic appointment, call: Children's hospital Colorado Concussion Hotline: (720) 777-2806

References:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Heads up: Concussion in High School Sports.
http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/high_school.html