

Concussions: recognize the symptoms and seek medical attention



An ounce of prevention can save the day

An estimated 800 high school students in Oregon suffer sports-related concussions each year.* A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a blow to the head. Long misunderstood as just part of the game, research has shown concussions can lead to devastating consequences if not identified and treated. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion and are more likely to experience prolonged memory and attention problems as a result.

Oregon school districts must ensure their athletic coaches are trained annually in recognizing symptoms and seeking proper medical treatment for possible concussions. Coaches must also prohibit athletes from trainings or events for at least the day after the injury and after symptoms are gone and the student provides a medical release from a health care professional.

At the beginning of the season, coaches should talk with student athletes and their parents about concussions, the new state law and procedures the team will follow. This can help prevent possible confrontations during athletic events.

* According to the Oregon School Activities Association.



Return to activity plan

Establish a procedure for injured students to return to activity safely, include incremental steps that must be met before a student with a concussion injury returns to full play. The plan may include but is not limited to:

1. Complete cognitive rest
2. Return to school full time
3. Light exercise
4. Running in gym or on the field
5. Non-contact training drills with full equipment
6. Full contact practice/training
7. Play in game

Remember to always follow the advice of a health care professional.

Rules to follow after injury

Protect your players, your school and yourself when dealing with suspected concussion injuries by following these rules:

- **When in doubt, keep them out** – Remove the student from activity immediately.
 - **Stand tall, make the call** – Contact parents, get appropriate health care.
 - **No play without OK** – Require a signed release from a health care provider before student returns to activity.
 - **Follow policies** set by your district.
- Concussion is a serious injury. Learn to detect and respond quickly to its symptoms.

Resources and training

- PACE, pace.osba.org
- Concussion training for coaches, brain101.orcasinc.com
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/concussion
- Oregon School Activities Association, www.osaa.org

Signs you can observe:

- Appears dazed/stunned
- Moves/speaks slowly
- Unsure of plays/score/opponent
- Forgets events right before or right after injury
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Can't concentrate

Symptoms athlete experiences:

- Headache
- Nausea/vomiting
- Dizzy/balance problems
- Blurry or double vision
- Tired, sluggish, foggy
- Sensitive to light/noise

PACE Risk Management

1-800-285-5461

losscontrol@sdao.com

pace.osba.org