

Swanbourne Tigers Junior Football Club

Significant Head / Impact management plan.



“If in doubt. Sit them out!”

Any player(Child) who receives a significant head knock / impact needs 1st aid review. This may start on the field, but the player must come off for a sideline assessment to decide if they can continue to play.

Any Player assessed by the club 1st aider of having a **definite or probable concussion** needs medical (GP, sports practitioner or sport physician) review and clearance before return to training or playing football. The parents of the child must supply this review to the team manager before return to training. If concussion is confirmed, the length of break from football/sport is determined by the medical specialist, but player should expect to miss at least both training and football the following week.

If a player has a significant head / impact event and there are vague symptoms they are not to return to play that day. The player’s parent/s should be informed and given a “parent’s guide to concussion”. The parent should monitor for signs and symptoms of concussion as outlined in the guide and see a medical practitioner if there any concerns of concussion.

If a player has a significant head / impact and are free of symptoms, they may return to play. Worth checking with parent if they are present as they may detect more subtle changes. Player should be watched during the rest of the game and reassessed at breaks. Parents should still be informed and ideally given a “parent’s guide to concussion”.

Emergency Review – Should be via the Emergency Department.

Review for ongoing symptoms or medical clearance – Is probably best completed by a Sport Practitioners who regularly deal with concussion. Some GP maybe experienced, but I do not have list of names.

Local Sport Practitioners. (2017)

Dr Casey White and Dr Simon Jenkin
Sports Exercise Movement 460 Stirling Hwy, Peppermint Grove WA 6011.
(08) 92844511

Dr Jonathon Charlesworth and Dr Tom Hill.
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A Parent's Guide to Concussions

From the Nationwide Children's Hospital - Sports Medicine : Ohio, USA.

Concussion Identification:

What is a concussion?

A concussion may be caused by a blow, bump, or jolt to the head or by any fall or hit that jars the brain. This "invisible" injury disrupts the brain's normal physiology which can affect mental stamina and function, causing the brain to work longer and harder to complete even simple tasks. A concussion may involve loss of consciousness (being "knocked out"), but the majority do not. Ultimately, ALL concussions are serious because they are brain injuries!

How do I tell if my child has sustained a concussion?

A concussion can affect a child in many different ways: physically, cognitively, emotionally, and by disturbing sleep. The table below indicates common symptoms for each category.

Common Concussion Symptoms

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	SLEEP
Headache	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Trouble falling asleep
Dizziness	Feeling slowed down	Sadness	Sleeping more than usual
Balance problems	Difficulty concentrating	Nervousness	Sleeping less than usual
Nausea/Vomiting	Difficulty remembering	More emotional than usual	
Fatigue	Difficulty focusing		
Sensitivity to light			
Sensitivity to noise			

While a blow to the head may not seem serious immediately, concussion symptoms can develop upon impact or up to 48 hours after the incident. Ignoring any signs or symptoms of a concussion is putting the child's long- and short-term health at risk.

Underreporting of concussions: The importance of honesty.

Even though concussions are very serious and potentially life threatening to the young athlete, studies show that less than 50% of high school athletes will report their concussions. Even after being diagnosed, many athletes feel pressured to say they do not have symptoms when they still do. This is dangerous and should always be avoided. Almost all athletes who have died or suffered serious complications from repeated concussions did not report their continued concussion symptoms to their parents, athletic trainer, or doctor. Therefore, it is vitally important that parents, coaches, and athletes recognize the signs and symptoms of concussions and encourage honesty in reporting them.

Is it dangerous for my child to play sports with a concussion?

Yes, without question. Second impact syndrome is a catastrophic event that can occur when a second blow to the head happens before an athlete has completely recovered from a concussion. This second impact, which may be even a minor blow, causes brain swelling, resulting in severe consequences such as brain damage, paralysis, and even death. This condition occurs only in youth and adolescents up to age 21. Therefore, no child should be allowed to participate in any physical activity if he or she has sustained a possible concussion. In addition, no child should return to participation after sustaining a concussion before he or she is cleared by a qualified medical professional.

Concussion Management:

If my child sustains a concussion, what should I do?

1) **The child should be monitored for worsening signs and symptoms in the 24 to 48 hours following the injury.** If any of the following danger signs present themselves, the child should be evaluated by a physician immediately.

- Severe or increased headache
- Double vision
- Unequal pupils
- Convulsions
- Unusual/increased drowsiness
- Bleeding/clear fluid from the ear/nose
- Projectile or repeated vomiting
- Unusual stiffness in the neck area
- Severe personality changes
- Weakness in either arm(s) or leg(s)
- Numbness in the face/extremities

2) **follow these recommendations:**

- Do not let the child perform any strenuous activity or go back to playing in sports.
- Do not use aspirin or ibuprofen for headaches. Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) only.
- Encourage your child to rest and eat a light diet.
- Allow them to use ice packs on the head and/or neck to ease pain.
- Let them sleep in a cool, dark, quiet room.

3) **Arrange for your child to be evaluated by a medical professional qualified and educated in concussion evaluation and management,** such as a sports medicine physician. Knowledge about concussions is rapidly evolving. The previous severity scales, such as a grade 1 or grade 3 concussion are no longer used. Preventing your child from going to sleep or to wake him or her every hour after a concussion is also an outdated practice. Don't be afraid to ask the healthcare provider if he or she is aware of the up-to-date concussion protocols.

Concussion Recovery:

Concussion recovery should be a collaborative approach

A concussion can affect school, work, and sports. Along with [coaches](#) and [teachers](#), the child's school nurse, athletic trainer, employer, and other school administrators, such as a guidance counselor, should be aware of the child's injury and their roles in helping the child recover. Varying or mixed messages from any of these parties may cause the child unnecessary distress and confusion, so clear communication among the group is vital.

Why is mental rest important to recovery?

A concussion affects how the brain works, so resting the brain as much as possible is necessary for recovery. In this context, mental activities are defined as those in which the brain must work hard to process information. This includes critical thinking and problem solving activities such as schoolwork, homework, and technology use.

What can I do to help my child achieve mental rest?

Restrictions from the following should be considered, because these activities increase brain function, and therefore may worsen symptoms and delay recovery:

- Computer work/Internet use
- Video games
- Television
- Excessive text messaging/cell phone use
- Bright lights, such as strobe lights at school dances
- Listening to loud music or music through headphones
- Loud noises
- Parties, concerts, pep rallies, etc.
- Driving
- Work

How do I know when my child is using his or her brain too much?

Continued activity when symptoms are moderate to severe can prevent the brain from healing. Therefore, the key to concussion recovery is to reduce mental activities until symptoms improve and then gradually begin increasing the length and difficulty of those activities as symptoms allow.

On days where the symptoms are severe (which often occur in the first few days after injury), it may be better to suspend any scheduled mental activities (i.e. school, work, homework, etc.) and have the child rest at home.

As symptoms improve, the child may begin to gradually resume simple school-related mental activities. As difficulty is increased, continue monitoring symptoms. Ask, "Do you have any symptoms? Are your symptoms getting worse since you started this activity?" If the child states symptoms are worsening, have him or her stop what they are doing and rest. If the symptoms resolve with rest in a short period of time (20 minutes or less), the child may be allowed to resume the mental activity. If symptoms remain elevated, the child should discontinue the activity and rest and re-attempt when symptoms have improved (such as the next day).

Note that there may be good days when symptoms are very mild and bad days when symptoms may be a little worse. This is a normal part of recovery. Sometimes there is a fine line between how much mental activity is okay and how much is too much. The key is to try to figure out where that line is to minimize symptoms as much as possible.

How is school affected by a concussion?

Schoolwork demands focus, memory, and concentration – all brain processes that are affected by a concussion. Academic accommodations, ranging from medically necessary absences to tutoring or extra time for test taking, may be necessary in some cases to decrease symptoms and begin the healing process.

Notify your child's teachers that he or she has sustained a concussion and provide them with any written recommendations you were given during your visit to your healthcare professional. Nationwide Children's Hospital Sports Medicine has a document specifically for teachers, called [*An Educator's Guide to Concussions in the Classroom*](#) which highlights academic accommodations for students healing from concussion.

Why is physical rest important to recovery?

In the context of concussions, physical activity is any situation in which a child has an elevated heart rate. Such activities include, but are not limited to, sports, gym class, weight lifting, and active play. Due to the risk of Second Impact Syndrome and other complications, a child who has been diagnosed with a concussion should not return to any physical activity and/or athletics until cleared by a healthcare provider experienced in concussion evaluation and management. Physical rest is essential to keep the child safe and to enable the brain to heal.

When can a child who has sustained a concussion safely go back to participating in gym class and/or sports?

A child who has sustained a concussion should not return to physical activity until cleared by an appropriate healthcare provider. The child should be completely symptom free and participating in school fully. Once cleared, the child should participate in a gradual progression back to activity. Ideally, a certified athletic trainer should supervise the child during this timeframe. This gradual progression is critical because a return of any signs or symptoms of concussion during mild physical activity signals that the brain has not healed and the child is not ready to return to activity.