

Albany Police Activities League Concussion Information

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. Even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following

- Headaches
- “Pressure in head”
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems
- Repeating the same question/comment

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

- Appears dazed
- Vacant facial expression
- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily or displays incoordination
- Answers questions slowly
- Amnesia
- “Don’t feel right”
- Fatigue or low energy
- Slurred speech
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit
- Can’t recall events after hit
- Seizures or convulsions
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Loses consciousness

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries, including concussions.

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours.

Return to play concussion guidelines

- An athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time and for the remainder of the day.
- An athlete who has been removed may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider
- If a licensed health care provider determines that an athlete sustained a concussion or a head injury, the athlete must complete a graduated return to play protocol of no less than seven days in duration under the supervision of a licensed health care provider. Due to the age of APAL athletes it is recommended he or she wait 7 days before even beginning the return to play protocol

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. When in doubt, the athlete sits out.

References and for current information please see:

Center for Disease Control information on concussions in youth sports,
<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>

Youth Sports Concussion Safety Laws, CA specifically AB 2127 (July 2014)
<http://www.momsteam.com/california/youth-sports-concussion-safety-laws-california>

Albany High School "Concussion Information Sheet" https://e16491e0-a-fccaf37-sites.googlegroups.com/a/ausdk12.org/albany-high/athletics/Athletic-Clearance-formsInformation/ConcussionParent_Athlete.pdf