

Concussion Information

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are 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. In other words, 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 you/your athlete/partner report any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away. Athletes/partners 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 athlete/partner 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/partner 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 athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries, and concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and athletes is the key for athlete safety.

Any athlete/partner even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete/partner 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/partner should continue for several hours.

Special Olympics Maryland, Inc. requires the consistent and uniform implementation of well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years including 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 may not return to play until the athlete/partner is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and has received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

For a listing of potential symptoms, view the complete Concussion Information

Sheet at:

https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/custom/headsupconcussion_fact_sheet_for_parents.pdf

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html>

