



Princeton University Athletic Medicine Concussion Information Sheet



What is a concussion?

A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head or caused by the head striking something else such as the ground. A concussion typically causes the rapid onset of short lived impairment of brain function that resolves spontaneously with time. However, occasionally there can be a more significant problem, and it is important that the symptoms from every concussion be monitored by your athletic trainers and team physicians. Concussions usually do not cause structural damage to the brain. A concussion can occur whether or not a person is “knocked out.” When you suffer a concussion, you may have problems with concentration and memory, notice an inability to focus, feel fatigued, have a headache or feel nauseated. Bright lights and loud noises may bother you. You may feel irritable, be more emotional or have other symptoms. It may be difficult to study, attend class, or use the computer.

What should I watch for?

After evaluation by your athletic trainer / team physician, it may be determined that you are safe to go home. Otherwise, you may be sent to the UHS infirmary, or to the hospital. **If you are sent home, you should not be left alone. A responsible adult should accompany you.**

Symptoms from your concussion may persist when you are sent home but should not worsen, nor should new symptoms develop. You should watch for symptoms including:

- Increasing headache
- Increasing nausea or vomiting.
- Increasing confusion.
- Garbled speech.
- Unusual sleepiness or difficulty being awakened.
- Trouble using your arms or legs.
- Convulsions or seizure.

If you notice any of these problems or have any other problem that appears worse as compared to how you felt at the time you left the athletic trainer/team physician, immediately call public safety (609)-258-3333. If you are off campus, dial 911. Please also call your athletic trainer / team physician and/or University Health Center Inpatient Services (#'s located at the bottom of this handout).

Is it okay to go to sleep?

Concussion many times makes a player feel drowsy or tired. As long as you are not getting worse, as noted above, it is all right for you to sleep. We do want the responsible adult to be at home with you in case any problems arise.

Do I need a CT scan or MRI examination?

If the athletic trainer / team physicians have determined that you are able to go home after the practice or game, these types of diagnostic tests are not necessary. If you are sent to the hospital with a concern for a more complicated injury (e.g. skull fracture, or bleeding inside the skull) a CT scan or MRI examination may be considered. If your symptoms linger for several days these examination may also be considered.

May I take something for pain?

Do not take any medication unless your athletic trainer / team physician has told you to do so. Normally, we do not advise anything stronger than Tylenol and ask you to avoid such things as aspirin, Ibuprofen (Advil / Motrin), Naproxen (Aleve), or any other anti-inflammatory medication that you may have been taking. We also ask that you not consume any alcohol and avoid caffeine and any other stimulants. If you are taking any supplements, we would suggest that you discontinue the use of them as well. The team physician will determine when you can restart medications and supplements.

May I eat after the practice or game?

It is fine for you to eat if you are hungry. Remember, some athletes do have a sense of nausea and fatigue, and often find that their appetite is decreased immediately after a concussion. Do not force yourself to eat.

How long will I be observed?

You will be asked to follow up in the training room after your concussion. You will be assessed by the athletic trainer / team physicians and, if necessary, consultants. You will be monitored daily and your symptoms observed. You should refrain from any physical exertion including strength conditioning until released to do so by the medical staff. Return to practice and play decisions are made at the appropriate time by the team physicians. Additional testing will be considered (e.g. neuropsychological testing) and this will be explained to you during your follow up visit. Determining if school activities (e.g. class, exams) need to be modified can be evaluated by the team physicians.

If symptoms persist, what other support is available to me?

Your concussion may make it difficult to concentrate, study, and/or attend class. In such a situation, it's important for you to know that you have options for receiving additional support; (1) short-term adjustments or (2) extended accommodations to be made regarding your academic work. These options usually involve disclosing some information about your medical condition to other University offices and/or personnel.

What steps are necessary to be considered for post-concussive supports?

For short-term adjustments: Contact the Dean or Director of Studies in your residential college by email, copying your evaluating physician at University Health Services on the e-mail. Inform your dean or director of studies that you sustained a concussive injury, want them to be aware of your situation, and may need some time to recover. If you need a short-term adjustment in your academic course work (e.g., an extension on a paper or test), your dean or director of studies can help you to communicate with your instructor(s) efficiently and effectively about your circumstances and requirements.

For extended accommodations: Depending on the nature, severity and burden of your injury and its effects, you might be eligible for additional support and/or accommodations (e.g., assistance with note-taking or testing accommodations) via the Office of Disability Services. If you would like to explore this option, please contact ODS: ods@princeton.edu or 609-258-8840.

Important Telephone Numbers:

Name	Daytime Office No.	After Hours no.	Cell no.
Public Safety / On campus 911	609-258-3333		
Off campus 911	911		
Athletic Trainer	609-258-3527		
Dr. Sasha Steinlight	609-258-3141	609-258-3139	

University Health Services Inpatient Services 609-258-3139 (please call this # if you are unable to reach the athletic trainer or team physician. You can ask the nursing staff to also contact the team physician)

You are to report to the training room on: Day _____ Time _____

 Printed Name Signature of Student Athlete Date

 Printed Name Signature of Witness Date