

What should I do if I think I an athlete may have had a concussion?

Report the incident.

If the athlete has signs or symptoms at a game or practice, a Sideline Assessment should be performed. The SportsBrain Sideline Assessment Tool is available on the XLNTbrain-mobile app, or a paper version of the tool can be downloaded ahead of time from your dashboard on the XLNTbrain.com website, and can be kept handy on the sidelines. This assessment involves reporting the signs of concussion the athlete feels, what you observe, and some testing of the athlete's memory and balance. The tool alerts you if there are Red Flag warnings that may require emergency medical attention. If the athlete didn't have signs of concussion until after the game or practice, or if the paper version was used, you can complete the incident report online through your dashboard on the concussionmanagement.sportsbrain.com website.

REST!

If signs of concussion are present, REST is critical to the athlete's recovery. Because of the serious risks of re-injury, the athlete SHOULD NOT return to practice or gameplay. It is natural for the athlete to feel like they have to get back in the game, that they don't want to let their team, their friends, or their family down. But the truth is that if they push themselves, they will not recover as quickly and this may lead to more time off the field and away from the game.

Begin the daily symptom checklist.

Remind the athlete to begin filling out the daily symptom checklist on the first day after the concussion incident occurred. This can be done online through the athlete's dashboard on the concussionmanagement.sportsbrain.com website or through the athlete's log in on the XLNTbrain-mobile app. The best time of day to fill the symptom checklist out is in the evening. The athlete will receive an email every day, as a reminder to fill out the symptom checklist. Urge the athlete to be honest about reporting symptoms. The athlete's healthcare provider will be able to review the checklist as soon as it is filled it out, to make decisions about return to normal activity. This may be delayed if the athlete does not fill out the checklist on a daily basis.

Healthcare provider.

Urge the athlete or athlete's parents to let their healthcare provider know about the potential concussion incident. If they have already designated a healthcare provider, an email was sent alerting them that an incident has been reported. The parents or athlete will need to follow this up with a phone call to the healthcare provider's office. The athlete's healthcare provider should arrange for an appointment to make the diagnosis and to recommend further testing and management as necessary. The healthcare provider may provide the athlete with a Post-concussion Care Plan, which may include recommendations regarding modification of school related activities to allow the athlete to continue school without provoking concussion related symptoms.

Post-concussion testing

The healthcare provider will authorize the athlete to take a post-concussion test similar to the test that was given in the pre-season. Normally this would be done in the healthcare provider's office. This testing would be done for the first time as soon as possible after the concussion incident, and then again when the athlete's symptoms have resolved at rest.

Five Step Progressive Exertion.

Once the concussion related symptoms have resolved at rest, and the post-concussion testing is at baseline, the healthcare provider will authorize the Five Step Progressive Return to full exertion. This may be supervised by the athlete's parent, coach, or Athletic Trainer. The athlete must remain symptom free during each step. If signs and symptoms of concussion return upon exertion, the athlete must fall back to the previous level of exertion that does not provoke the concussion related symptoms for a day, and then may attempt to progress the next day. Further information about the Five Step Progressive Exertion may be found on the concussionmanagement.sportsbrain.com website.

Final post-concussion testing and return to gameplay.

Once the athlete is able to endure full physical exertion without provoking concussion symptoms, the healthcare provider will authorize a final post-concussion test. If the athlete performs at baseline on this test after full exertion, the healthcare provider will clear the athlete to return to full activity and gameplay.