

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

Report the incident.

If your athlete had signs or symptoms at a game or practice, the coach, athletic trainer, or other designated person should have performed a Sideline Assessment. This involves reporting the signs of concussion the athlete feels, what the person observes, and some testing of the athlete's memory and balance. You may review the Incident Report on your dashboard on the XLNTbrain.com website. If your athlete didn't have signs of concussion until after the game or practice, or if an incident was not reported, you can report the incident online through your dashboard on the concussionmanagement.sportsbrain.com website.

REST!

If signs of concussion are present, REST is critical to your athlete's recovery. Because of the serious risks of re-injury, your athlete SHOULD NOT return to practice or gameplay. It is natural for your 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. If any activity such as school work, readings, watching TV, playing video games, texting on your mobile phone, or working on the computer make their symptoms worse, they need to stop that activity.

Start Tracking Symptoms

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. You and your athlete will receive an email every day, as a reminder to fill out the symptom checklist. Urge your athlete to be honest about reporting your symptoms. Your 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.

Contact your athlete's healthcare provider.

Let your athlete's healthcare provider know about the potential concussion incident. If you have already designated a healthcare provider, an email was sent alerting them that an incident has been reported. You will need to follow this up with a phone call to the healthcare provider's office. Your athlete's healthcare provider should arrange for an appointment to make the diagnosis and to recommend further testing and management as necessary. Your healthcare provider may provide your 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. It is important that you let your healthcare provider know if this activity is too much, so that the Care Plan can be modified appropriately.

Take a post-concussion test.

Your healthcare provider will authorize your 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 your 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, your healthcare provider will authorize the Five Step Progressive Return to full exertion. This may be supervised by you or your athlete's 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 your athlete is able to endure full physical exertion without provoking concussion symptoms, your healthcare provider will authorize a final post-concussion test. If your athlete performs at baseline on this test after full exertion, your healthcare provider will clear your athlete to return to full activity and gameplay.