



NFLPA



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
NEUROLOGY



American College of
Emergency Physicians®

CONCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

DIAGNOSIS • REHABILITATION • EDUCATION



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of brain injury. It occurs when the brain moves quickly enough to interrupt its function. Most concussions result in full recovery, but some can lead to more severe injuries if not recognized and treated properly.

The source of the injury is not always clear. It can come from a blow to the head or even from a blow to the body. It can come from one big hit or from several smaller ones.

You may not always be aware that you are concussed. It is common that concussed people do not know they are injured. Look out for the health of your teammates. Be aware of these signs and symptoms in yourself and fellow players:

- Disorientation or confusion
- Memory loss
- Behavior or personality change
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling sleepy or groggy
- Sensitive to light or sound
- Dizziness or nausea
- Headache

If you or a teammate have any of these symptoms, tell your medical staff immediately. Trying to play with a concussion puts you at serious risk for further injury.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT FROM MY TEAM?

IMMEDIATE EVALUATION OF A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION.

If a concussion is suspected (in either a game or practice), you should be evaluated immediately. There is an NFL protocol for this evaluation that can be done in under 10 minutes. If you think you may have a concussion, report your symptoms and request this exam. **DO NOT TRY TO PLAY THROUGH THIS INJURY.**

THOROUGH EVALUATION TO DETERMINE PRESENCE OF CONCUSSION.

Not every hit that causes symptoms is a concussion and only medical personnel can make the diagnosis. You should be evaluated with a comprehensive neurological evaluation, ideally in a quiet, distraction-free place.

RETURN TO WORK. If you have a concussion, you should not participate in a game or practice until you are (1) symptom free at rest and during physical exertion and (2) cleared by your team physician AND the team's independent neurological consultant. The return to work protocol should involve several steps of increasing exertion – from a stationary bike, to jogging, to agility work, to non-contact drills. With each step, a player must be symptom free to move to the next step. You should never play football after a concussion if you have not been evaluated appropriately or are still experiencing symptoms.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

You have the right to a second opinion. It is your health and your brain. If you are unsure about your medical condition and/or your medical care, do not hesitate to seek additional care. There are many experts in sports concussion that can provide the care you need.

Don't let any question go unasked. You and your family deserve the best information. If you would like help getting a second opinion, or have a question, call the NFLPA or one of its medical advisors:

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