

HEAD & BRAIN CONDITIONS

As the science of evaluating and managing concussions has advanced, key findings emphasize the need for education on the signs and symptoms of concussion. There is a critical need for early identification and proper management of concussion.

Concussions can be difficult to recognize on the field. Most occur without a loss of consciousness or an obvious sign that something is wrong with a player's brain function. They can occur at any time throughout a game or practice, from a blow to the head or body, from contact with the ground, the ball, or another player.

Recognize the symptoms of concussion:

Changes in brain functions:

- Unaware of game (opposition colors, score of game, last play)
- Confusion
- Amnesia (does not recall events prior to the hit or after the hit)
- Drastic changes in alertness
- Does not know time, place or date
- Slowed responses to questions or conversation
- Decreased attention and concentration

Mental and emotional changes:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Irritability
- Emotionally unstable

Physical changes:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Unsteadiness/loss of balance
- Feeling "dinged" or stunned or "dazed"
- Seeing stars or flashing lights
- Ringing in the ears
- Double vision

ACTION TO TAKE FOR HEAD AND BRAIN CONDITIONS:

Remove, Evaluate and Rest are key steps to treating a concussion or other head injury in soccer. When a concussion is identified quickly, it prevents the injury from getting worse and prevents the player from staying off the field for even longer.

- An athlete who experiences a blow to the head or body should immediately be removed from play and should not return to play until he/she is evaluated. *When in doubt, the athlete should sit out.*
- Advise the player to have a health care professional evaluation immediately. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself.
- Never rush a return to play. A return to play should only occur after an athlete has been cleared by a medical professional. If you rush the return, a player is at significantly higher risk for more problems in the future.

Head & Brain Conditions link: www.recognizetorecover.org/head-and-brain