



Head Games: Are You Head Smart ?????

Concussion Basics 101

All Concussions Are Serious

What is a Concussion?

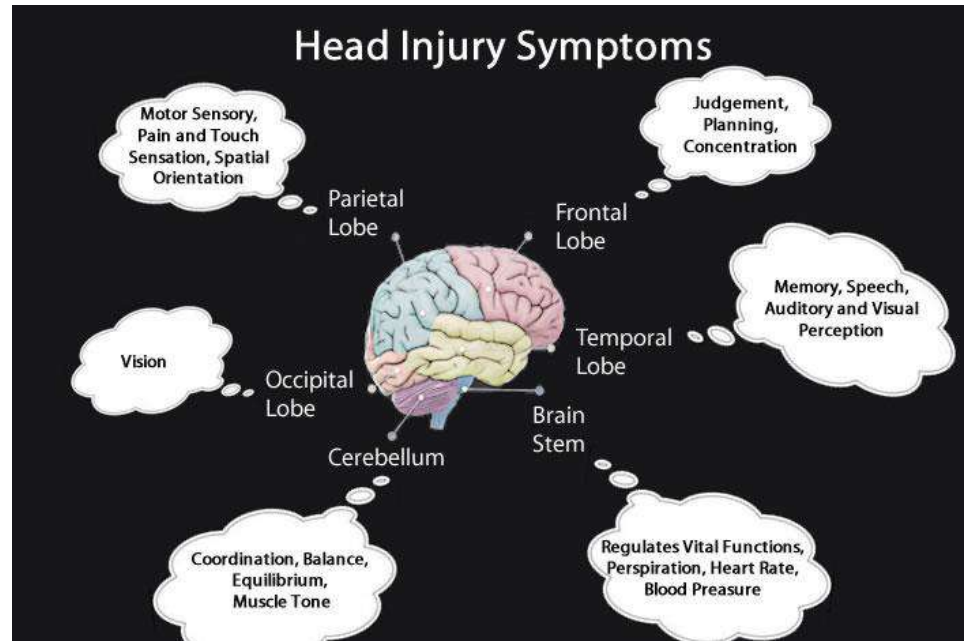
A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.



How Can a Concussion Affect Your Student?

- Though an invisible injury, a concussion can affect a student in many different ways:

- Physically
- Cognitively
- Emotionally
- Disturbing sleep



Common Concussion Symptoms

PHYSICAL	COGNITIVE	EMOTIONAL	SLEEP
Headache	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Trouble falling asleep
Dizziness	Feeling slowed down	Sadness	Sleeping more than usual
Balance problems	Difficulty concentrating	Nervousness	Sleeping less than usual
Nausea/Vomiting	Difficulty remembering	More emotional than usual	
Fatigue	Difficulty focusing		
Sensitivity to light			
Sensitivity to noise			

How are Concussions Managed by Health Professionals?

Above all else, the concussed brain requires mental and physical rest to recover from the injury. The physician treating the student may recommend the following :

- Absence from school or half-day attendance.
- Avoid extensive computer use, texting, video games, television, loud music and music through headphones.
- No participation in any physical activity until cleared by a physician, including gym class, weightlifting and sports activities.

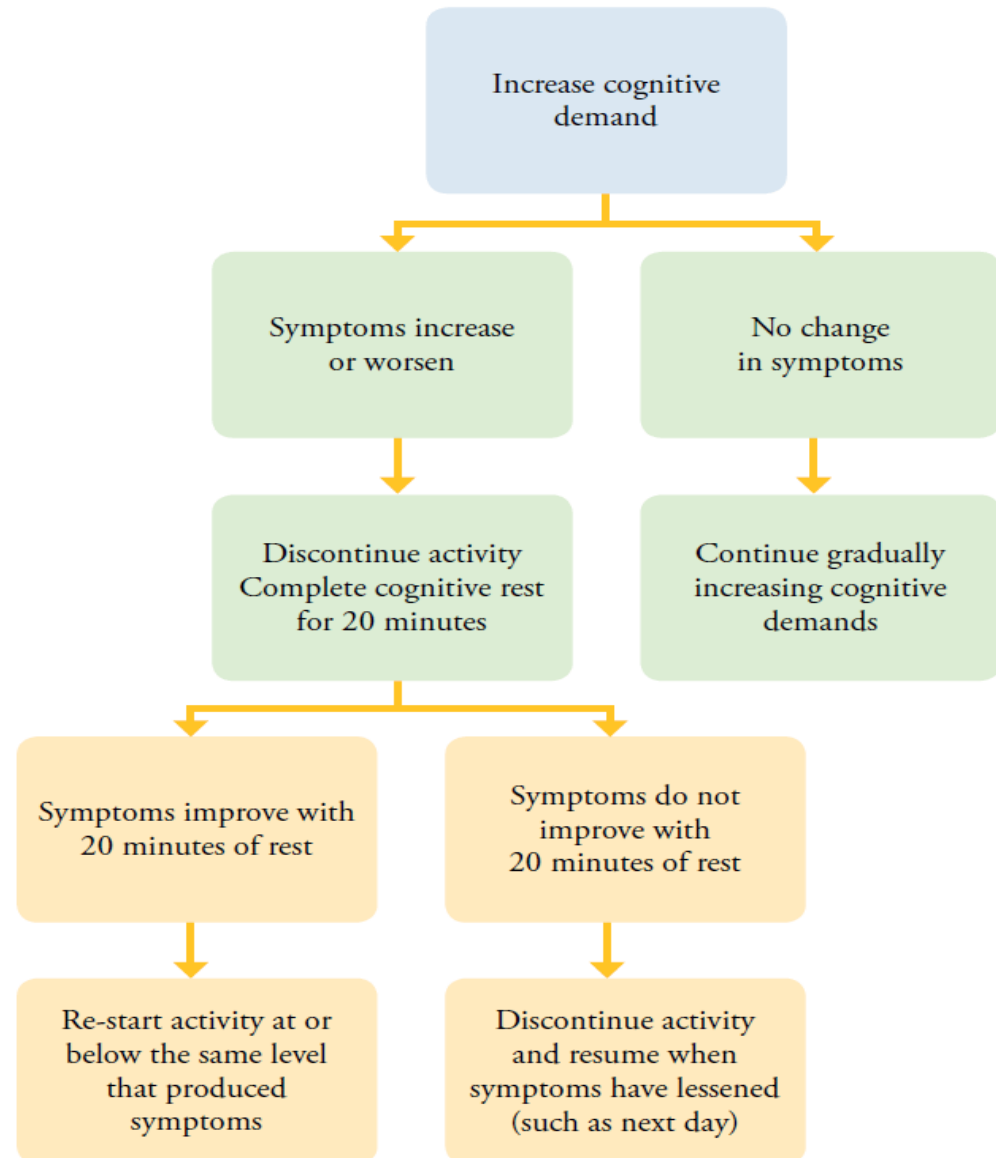
Ultimately, the key to a speedy recovery is both physical and mental rest.

Why Concussions Matter to You (i.e. The Teacher)

- Symptoms of concussion can impact classroom learning and schoolwork
- Physical symptoms interfere with student's ability to focus and concentrate
- Cognitive symptoms may impact learning, memorization and ability to remember assignments and tests
- Difficulties with school work may worsen the frustration, nervousness and/or irritability originally present
- Disturbances in sleep patterns often result in fatigue and drowsiness during the day

How Can You Help a Student Return to School After a Concussion?

- Every concussion is different.
- The emphasis on the return-to-school framework is allowing the student to participate and learn without worsening symptoms (which may delay healing).
- Finding out “how much is too much” may be a trial and error process to start.



What's Your Role?



- **Get educated!**
- **Be part of the TEAM!**
 - Nurses, Guidance Counselors, Administration, Parents, Teachers, Athletic Department *and don't forget the Student!*
 - Communication is key!
 - Report progress or setbacks
 - 504 Plan
- **Provide support - empathy, cooperation**

Creating a Culture of Safety

Many groups help create a sports culture for athletes.



Research from separate studies shows that **too many athletes:**

Do not report their concussion symptoms.

Are **not removed** from play and continue to play with symptoms.

Return to play too soon.

Creating a Safe Sport Culture. Athletes thrive when they:



Have fun playing
their sport.



Receive positive messages
and praise from their
coaches for concussion
symptom reporting.



Have parents who
talk with them about
concussion and model
and expect safe play.



Feel comfortable
reporting symptoms
of a possible
concussion to coaches.



Support their
teammates sitting
out of play if they
have concussion.



Get written instructions
from a health care
provider on when to
return to school and play.

What's Missing?

*** Even though knowledge and awareness of concussion is growing, research shows there are still gaps to be filled.**

- **Parents not familiar with state concussion laws or school or league protocols regarding return to learn/play**
- **Adults not able to identify symptoms and unaware of importance of managing cognitive activities following a concussion**
- **Health care providers do not feel they have adequate training on concussion**
- **Young athletes/students do not report symptoms**
- **Returning to Play/Learn too soon**



Action Steps



Adults should foster an environment where youth feel comfortable reporting. Adults should ask youth to share concerns about reporting, no matter what.



Youth are more likely to report concussion symptoms when they receive positive messages about reporting from adults.



Schools should keep list of concussion signs and symptoms on hand and visibly posted where youth can see. NOT just in gyms!



Youth may understand dangerous consequences of concussion yet some are unable to identify symptoms



Parents (et al) should receive written instructions from health care providers on return to learn/play strategies.



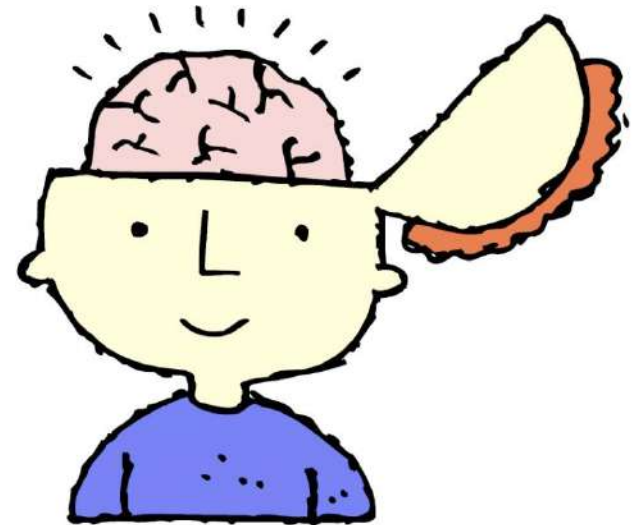
Health Care Providers and school professionals, along with parents and students, can help youth successfully return to learn/play .

Talking to Your Students About *Concussion*



Grades K-2 (Brain Basics)

- Where is the brain and what does it do?
- What is a concussion?
 - Brain is hurt and needs rest
- How do we protect our brains
 - helmets, seatbelts, car seats
- Activities:
 - Simon Says
 - **Jello Brain Mold**
 - What if? Activity



Grades 3-5

- What does it mean to have a concussion?
- List some symptoms.
- How can kids get a concussion?
- What happens inside your brain?
 - Temporary change in how your brain works
- How does a Doctor figure out if you have a concussion?
 - Balance and memory tests, symptoms like dizziness, headaches, trouble focusing
- How do you know when you are “back to normal”?
- Classroom Activities:
 - Jello brain mold
 - Symptom Game - Charades or matching
 - Smart Ways to Protect your Brain Handout (homework?)

Grades 6-8



- What is a concussion and how can it happen?
- Does a person have to lose consciousness?
- Steps a doctor takes to determine if you have a concussion.
- Why is it important to rest your brain? What can happen if you don't...?
- Name two ways to avoid a concussion
 - Seat belt , proper head gear for sports, bike riding, winter sports
- Classroom Activities:
 - Symptoms Game
 - Create a school concussion fact sheet for kids, teachers, etc.
 - Use PSA as example - then create an audio PSA for peers or elementary school students (see resources)

Grades 9-12



- What is a concussion and how can it happen?
- List some symptoms of a concussion.
- Why is it important to stop activity if you have had a blow to the head? What can happen if you continue? (Discuss “Second Impact Syndrome”)
- What does it mean to “REST” your brain?
- What activities should you avoid during recovery from a concussion?
- What is ImPACT testing and why is it important?
- Classroom Activities:
 - Watch CDC you tube videos
 - Create a podcast to educate peers about concussion
 - Students lead a classroom discussion about how concussion can affect a student's life (debate format)
 - Bring in speaker from bianj.org
 - Concussion handout/quiz

Review

- Concussion recognition and management in the classroom
- Your role on the Team? Who else is on the Team?
- Importance of communication
- Creating a Culture of Safety
- Talking to your students about concussion
 - Age appropriate education, activities, vocabulary

Questions??????

Resources

- www.rwjtrauma.org/injury-prevention
 - Scroll to bottom and click on “Concussion Resources”
- www.safekids.org
- www.bianj.org
- <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/>
- <http://classroom.kidshealth.org/classroom/>
 - Search “Concussion”

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