What is a concussion?
A concussion is a brain injury that:
• Is caused by a blow to the head or body.
  – From contact with another player, hitting a hard surface such as the ground, ice or floor, or being hit by a piece of equipment such as a bat, lacrosse stick or field hockey ball.
• Can change the way your brain normally works.
• Can range from mild to severe.
• Presents itself differently for each athlete.
• Can occur during practice or competition in ANY sport.
• Can happen even if you do not lose consciousness.

How can I prevent a concussion?
Basic steps you can take to protect yourself from concussion:
• Do not initiate contact with your head or helmet. You can still get a concussion if you are wearing a helmet.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?
You can’t see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury.
Concussion symptoms include:
• Amnesia.
• Confusion.
• Headache.
• Loss of consciousness.
• Balance problems or dizziness.
• Double or fuzzy vision.
• Sensitivity to light or noise.
• Nausea (feeling that you might vomit).

For more information and resources, visit www.NCAA.org/health-safety & www.CDC.gov/Concussion.
• Feeling sluggish, foggy or groggy.
• Feeling unusually irritable.
• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays, facts, meeting times).
• Slowed reaction time.

Exercise or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games may cause concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness) to reappear or get worse.

**What should I do if I think I have a concussion?**

**Don't hide it.** Tell your athletic trainer and coach. Never ignore a blow to the head. Also, tell your athletic trainer and coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out.

**Report it.** Do not return to participation in a game, practice or other activity with symptoms. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to return to play.

**Get checked out.** Your team physician, athletic trainer, or health care professional can tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are cleared to return to play. A concussion can affect your ability to perform everyday activities, your reaction time, balance, sleep and classroom performance.

**Take time to recover.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a repeat concussion. In rare cases, repeat concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death. Severe brain injury can change your whole life.

**It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.**

When in doubt, get checked out.

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