

Concussion

What is it? Concussion refers to any jarring process to the head that causes temporary changes to the normal function of the brain. People do not have to be “knocked out” to sustain a concussion; in fact, most people aren’t knocked out. Most people with concussions have normal imaging studies of the brain, such as CT or MRI. Imaging studies are often done to rule out bleeding or fractures, but can’t show concussion brain injury.

What are the symptoms? Most people who have a concussion feel a variety of symptoms.

- Feeling “in a fog”
- Headache
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Memory problems
- Irritability
- Unusual behavior
- Nausea and vomiting

Other more subtle problems may go unnoticed, such as decreased ability to form new memories and decreased mental processing speed. These symptoms usually go away in days to weeks. Until they are completely resolved, people with concussions are at increased risk for worsening their injury from even minor trauma.

How are concussions prevented? The likelihood of sustaining a concussion can be decreased by wearing properly fitted protective headgear when participating in contact or high risk sports, such as snowboarding or motorcycle riding.

If symptoms worsen after a patient has been evaluated for a concussion, a doctor should be notified? Call your doctor right away or go to the emergency department if you notice any of the following symptoms.

- Inability to awaken patient
- Persistent vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Double vision
- Loss of coordination
- Worsening headache
- Unequal pupil size
- Seizures
- High temperature
- Stiff neck

Recommended follow up for patients who’ve had a concussion? Patients with a concussion should be reevaluated within 24-72 hours after the injury. If not already done, they may have an imaging study, MRI or CT, done of their head. The doctor may have the patient take a computerized test to evaluate the severity of the concussion. Testing may also be helpful at deciding when it’s safe to go back to playing sports. Ongoing follow up is recommended until the patient is asymptomatic at rest, with exercise, and has returned to expected baseline on computerized concussion testing.

For more information or to schedule an appointment at the Sports Concussion Clinic, please call 208-383-0201



Intermountain Orthopaedics
Sports Medicine Center

600 N. Robbins Rd., Suite 401, Boise, ID 83702

Office: (208)383-0201 Fax: (208) 489-4300

Intermountainortho.com