

Wisportsconcussion.org

What is a concussion?

“Any alteration of mental function following a blow to the head that may or may not involve a loss of consciousness”

American Academy of Neurology, 1997

A concussion is a disturbance in the function of the brain caused by a direct or indirect force to the head. It results in a variety of symptoms (like those listed below) and may, or may not, involve memory problems or loss of consciousness.

1. Concussion may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an 'impulsive' force transmitted to the head.
2. Concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurological function that resolves spontaneously.
3. Concussion may result in neuropathological changes but the acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than structural injury.
4. Concussion results in a graded set of clinical syndromes that may or may not involve loss of consciousness. Resolution of the clinical and cognitive symptoms typically follows a sequential course.
5. Concussion is typically associated with normal neuroimaging studies such as MRI or CT Scans.

It should be recognized that the reporting of symptoms may not be entirely reliable. This may be due to the effects of a concussion or because the athlete's passionate desire to return to competition outweighs their natural inclination to give an honest response.

Remember, concussion should be suspected in the presence of ANY ONE or more of the following:

- Symptoms (such as headache, dizziness, drowsiness), or
- Signs (such as seizures, loss of consciousness), or
- Memory problems (inability to remember events immediately before or after the injury)

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be monitored for deterioration (i.e., should not be left alone) and should not drive a motor vehicle.