

Needham High School

Concussion Protocol



This document illustrates the correct concussion protocol a student-athlete must follow if they have sustained a concussion.

What is a concussion?

- An injury to the brain cells that causes a disturbance in normal brain function
- Another term for concussion is a Mild Traumatic Brain Injury so these protocols have to be taken very seriously at all times

What is Second Impact Syndrome?

- Where the student-athlete sustains a second concussion without being fully recovered from the first concussion

There are TWO main causes of concussion:

1. Receiving a hit/ blow directly to the head
2. Receiving a hit/ blow to another part of the body that causes the head to accelerate forward or backward

Signs & Symptoms:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| ● Headache | ● Dazed/ confused | ● Trouble concentrating |
| ● Nausea | ● Ringing in the ears | ● Memory Difficulties |
| ● Vomiting | ● Nystagmus (Repetitive uncontrolled eye movements) | ● Fatigue |
| ● Blurred Vision | ● Numbness/ weakness | ● Trouble Sleeping |
| ● Sensitivity to light or noise | ● Poor Balance | ● Irritability/ mood changes |

If the above signs & symptoms get worse, the student-athlete experiences any loss of consciousness for any period of time, or is showing very noticeable personality changes they must go to the **emergency room** right away.

If a head injury occurs without the athletic trainer present, call the parents to inform them of the suspected injury, and remove the athlete from play

Return to Play Protocol:

- A student-athlete is NOT allowed to return to play until they are back in school full time, with no concussion-related academic accommodations.
- The student-athlete has to see their physician in order to get cleared before the return to play protocol can begin. The form that has to get signed is the clearance form below.
- Once they are in school with no signs/ symptoms the student-athlete will work with the athletic trainer to complete the 5-day protocol in order to be able to fully return to their sport.
- The student-athlete must complete this gradual return to play plan with the supervision of the athletic trainer. The athletic trainer will sign off each day the athlete passes.
- If at any time the student-athlete shows their concussion symptoms have returned in this process, they will end all activity and rest (at least 24 hours) until they no longer have symptoms again.
 - The student-athlete will repeat the day in the protocol that causes symptoms to recur until they can complete the day with no symptoms.
- It is the student-athletes responsibility to coordinate time after school with their athletic trainer to complete the return to play protocol.

Clearance form (must be filled out and signed by a physician):

*There will be printed copies in the athletic training room to take as well!

[Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form | Mass.gov](#)

Gradual Return to Play Protocol:

Day 1: Low levels of physical activity. This includes walking, light jogging, and light stationary biking

Day 2: Moderate levels of physical activity with body/head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, and moderate-intensity on the stationary cycle

Day 3: Heavy non-contact physical activity. This includes sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary cycling, completing the regular lifting routine, and non-contact sport-specific drills

Day 4: Sports-specific practice (no contact drills)

Day 5: Full contact (if appropriate) in a controlled drill or practice

Day 6: Return to competition