

“The 15 Critical Questions Regarding Concussions, Baseline Testing, and Return to Play Medical Decisions”

1. What is a concussion? How do they occur?

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that is caused by a blow to the head and/or body. When your head/body suffers a blow, your brain will bounce off of your skull and temporarily stop the brain from functioning. Concussions can occur from playground injuries, falling off a bicycle, fights, falling, car accidents and of course ALL athletic sports.

2. What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

As it may be an indication of concussion, do not hesitate to seek medical attention if an athlete displays or describes experiencing any of the following symptoms:

Signs observed	Signs reported by athlete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears to be dazed or stunned • Is confused about assignment • Forgets plays • Is unsure of game, score, or opponent • Moves clumsily • Answers questions slowly • Loses consciousness (even temporarily) • Shows behavior or personality change • Forgets events prior to hit (retrograde amnesia) • Forgets events after hit (anterograde amnesia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Nausea • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or fuzzy vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish • Feeling "foggy" • Change in sleep pattern • Concentration or memory problems

3. What tests should you get for your child/athlete to make sure they are safe?

Every child/athlete should have a baseline ImPACT neurocognitive test. Optimally, this test should be taken for athletes before the start of the season, but even midseason or post season your child/athlete should always have a baseline on file. This test will give physicians a true neurocognitive normal prior to a child/athlete getting concussed. An additional test is a balance assessment to look at a child/athletes postural stability. Universities and specialized clinics are incorporating an additional assessment for balance testing like BESS, SAC or CDP (Computerized Dynamic Posturography). Together, ImPACT and a balance assessment make up a full comprehensive baseline evaluation to keep your child/athlete safer.