Concussion & TBI Prevention

✓ Wear a fitted helmet when playing contact sports, batting and running bases, skating or skateboarding, or riding a bike, horse, motorcycle, scooter, or ATV
✓ During athletic practice or games, use protective equipment, follow safety rules of the sport, practice good sportsmanship, and do not play with a known or suspected concussion
✓ Always wear a seat belt
✓ Buckle children in using a child safety seat or booster seat as appropriate
✓ Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
✓ Make living areas safer for seniors by removing tripping hazards, using nonslip mats and installing grip bars in the bathroom
✓ Make living areas safer for children by installing window guards, safety gates, and removing tripping hazards
✓ Make sure the surface of your child’s playground is made of shock-absorbing material such as sand
✓ Exercise regularly to maintain body strength and balance

Contact Information

The clinic is led by Dr. Anthony P. Salvatore, Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, Board Certified by the Academy of Neurologic Communication Disorders and Sciences (ANCDS), clinically certified in speech-language pathology and licensed to practice by the State of Texas.

Contact the Concussion Management Clinic at UTEP by calling 747-7250 for further information. The clinic is located in the College of Health Sciences, Room 107, 1101 N. Campbell Street, El Paso, Texas.

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Information in this pamphlet was compiled from the Centers for Disease Control, the Brain Institute of Oregon Health and Science University, Protecting Athletes through Concussion Education (PACE), the Think-First-SportSmart Education and Awareness Program, and the University of Texas at El Paso Concussion Management Clinic.

Information on concussions, symptoms, the recovery process, and tips for prevention
What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, hit, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a fall or a hit to the body that causes the head to shake back and forth. They cannot be seen on x-rays or CT scans because concussions change the way the brain functions, not the way it looks. These changes can show up symptomatically throughout the entire body, and they may affect how you feel physically and emotionally, your vision, balance, concentration, and sleep.

Since brain injuries are not visible to the eye, someone with a concussion may “look normal.” However, a concussion can be a very serious injury, identified mainly by concussion symptoms that you cannot just “walk off.” It is important to be aware of the many indicators of concussions and understand the recovery process. If you ever suspect that you may have a concussion, tell your coach, parent, or trainer right away.

Concussion Symptoms

Symptoms of a concussion generally affect four areas: thinking/remembering, your physical body, mood/emotions, and sleep.

If you are suffering from a concussion, you may find:

- Your thoughts are fuzzy or you don’t feel quite right.
- You have a hard time concentrating, thinking clearly, or remembering.
- You have headaches, nausea, fatigue or loss of energy.
- It’s difficult to keep your balance or you have blurred vision.
- Your mood or emotions are different; you may feel irritable, sad, depressed or more anxious than usual.
- You are sleeping more than usual, less than usual, or have difficulty falling asleep.

Remember, you need only one of the above symptoms to indicate a concussion. Symptoms can last for days, weeks, months, or longer. Fortunately, most people recover within 10 days. The recovery process includes getting plenty of rest, avoiding physical activity and limiting school work.

Getting Better

Getting lots of rest and limiting your activity are important to your recovery. Rest is very essential after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. Ignoring your symptoms and trying to “tough it out” often makes symptoms worse. Be patient because healing takes time, and if you go back to your normal activities before you have fully recovered, it is likely your symptoms will get worse and last longer. Only when your symptoms have gone away, in consultation with your doctor, should you slowly and gradually return to your daily activities, such as sports or school. If your symptoms come back or you get new symptoms as you become more active, this is a sign that you are pushing yourself too hard. Stop these activities and take more time to rest and recover. As the days go by, you can expect to gradually feel better.

Tips for Faster Recovery:

- Get adequate sleep at night; take daytime naps or breaks when you feel tired
- Drink lots of fluids
- Eat healthy; consume protein or carbohydrates every 3-4 hours
- Wear sunglasses and a hat outside; avoid direct light
- Limit physical activity (e.g. working out, sports)
- Limit activities that require heavy concentration (e.g. classwork, reading)
- Avoid texting, watching TV, and using the computer
- Avoid listening to music and being in loud places
- Avoid alcohol and drugs