



Bolivar-Richburg Central School District

What is a concussion, or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body
- Can change the way a student's brain normally functions
- Can occur during practice and/or contests in any sport
- Occurs even without a loss of consciousness
- Can be serious no matter the severity

All concussions are serious. A concussion can affect a student's ability to do schoolwork and other activities such as: video games, watching television, driving, studying, and exercising. Most students with a concussion recover with time and rest, but it is important to give the concussed student's brain time to heal. All concussions and all people have a different rate of healing, there is no timeframe as to the length of time an athlete will miss participation due to a concussion.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

Concussions cannot be seen; however, in a potentially concussed student, one or more of the symptoms listed below may become apparent and/or that student may not feel like themselves soon after, a few days after, or even weeks after the injury.

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| • Headache or "Pressure" in the head | • Feeling sluggish, or groggy |
| • Nausea or vomiting | • Difficulty paying attention |
| • Balance problems | • Memory problems |
| • Dizziness | • Mood changes |
| • Double and/or blurry vision | • Confusion |
| • Sensitive to light/noise | |

What should students do if they believe that they, or someone else, may have a concussion?

- **Students feeling any of the symptoms set forth above should immediately tell their Athletic Trainer, Coach, School Nurse and their parents/guardians.** Also, if they notice any teammate showing symptoms, they should immediately tell their Athletic Trainer, Coach and/or Nurse.
- **The student should be evaluated.** A licensed physician should examine the student to make the final determination if that individual has sustained a concussion. Your physician should also determine when that student is cleared to begin the return to play (RTP) protocol to participate in athletics following a concussion or TBI. It is strongly recommended that the student be seen by their primary care physician, or PCP, whenever possible for evaluation and clearance.
- **Concussed students should give themselves time to heal.** If a student has sustained a concussion, the student's brain needs time to heal. While a concussed student's brain is healing, that student is more likely to have another concussion. Repeated concussions can increase the time it takes for an already concussed student to recover and may cause more damage to the

student's brain. Such damage can have long-term consequences. It is important that a concussed student rest and not return to play until the student receives permission from a physician, and the student is symptom free.

- **How can students prevent a concussion?** Every sport/activity is different, but there are steps students can take to protect themselves from injury.
 - Use of proper equipment, including personal protective equipment, for equipment to properly fit a student it must be:
 - The right equipment for the sport, position and activity
 - Worn correctly with the correct size and fit
 - Used every time the student participates in the sport/activity
 - Follow the coach's/teacher's rules for safety as well as the rules of the sport/activity.
 - Practice good sportsmanship

CONCUSSIONS & RETURNING TO PLAY:

Bolivar-Richburg Central School District follows these guidelines when dealing with students who have sustained a concussion, or are thought to have sustained a concussion, and are returning to play.

1. Any student that has been diagnosed with a concussion will need to see their doctor after they have been symptom free for at least 24 hours.
2. Your physician must release the student to begin the return to play/activity protocol BEFORE they may return to physical activity and school sports.
3. When the physician releases the student to begin the return to play protocol, the following steps must be followed:

Step 1: 10-15 minutes of light cardio activity (walking on treadmill, exercise bike, walking around the track/school facilities).

Step 2: 10-15 minutes of moderate cardio exercise (stationary bike, elliptical, fast walking on treadmill, inclined treadmill walks). Resistance training on weight machines. No free weights.

Step 3: 15-20 minutes of moderately aggressive cardio exercise (jogging on treadmill or track, interval running/walking, limited sports practice). Can begin free weightlifting if warranted.

Step 4: Non-contact sport/gym specific exercise or practice, including functional skills, weightlifting and other sport specific activities that do not require contact.

Step 5: Full Return to practice/game activity. THE STUDENT MUST HAVE A PHYSICIAN'S FINAL CLEARANCE NOTE BEFORE MOVING TO STEP 5.

4. Athlete must be symptom free for at least a 24-hour period AND released by their physician before the gradual exertion (RTP protocol can be started. If any number of symptoms return at any point during the rehab protocol, all activity is stopped until symptoms are gone and the protocol is started at the previous step.
 - a. Ex: an athlete is on step 3 and begins to have symptoms return, after symptom free for 24 hours, the student would begin the protocol again on step 2.
5. The Bolivar-Richburg Central School District medical director will give the final student clearance to be released from concussion protocol when they have successfully completed the return to play/activity steps.

