

Concussion Management

What causes a concussion?

Q

A: A concussion can be caused by either an impact to the head or a rapid deceleration of the body. In either case, the injury jars or shakes the brain within the skull. Ideally,

the fluid around your brain should act as a cushion to protect your brain, but if your head or your body is hit hard, your brain can move within the skull and be injured.

Q: What are common signs and symptoms of a concussion?

A: It is important to note that there are no outward signs of a concussion and you don't have to lose consciousness for an injury to be a concussion. This is an internal injury that can reveal itself in many ways. In fact, there are 23 main symptoms of a concussion. Because each individual injury is unique, we often find some combination of symptoms. These can include a overall foggy feeling, headache, nausea, sensitivity to light and sound, memory issues, trouble with concentration, fatigue and changes in personality and/or behavior.

Q: What should someone do if they believe they have suffered a concussion?

A: It is very important for patients to go to the Emergency Room and get evaluated as soon as possible. There is no specific diagnostic test for a concussion, but physicians need to determine if there is bleeding (epidural hematoma) or swelling (subdural hematoma) in the brain. These dangerous conditions could be fatal. A CAT Scan and other tools help us determine the severity of the injury.

Q: Once a concussion occurs, what are the treatment options?

A: One of the most difficult aspects of a concussion is treatment. We recommend removing stress and overstimulation from a patient's daily routine. That means lots of rest, no music, movies, video games, school, etc. Achieving this low level of activity is a challenge, but it is important to give the brain time to heal, especially in young people. As I said before, each injury is unique, so there is no set timetable for recovery.

Ask a Doctor



featuring
Dr. Sean Lager

Q: Athletes often suffer from concussions. What steps need to be taken to ensure that athletes at all levels are safe and protected from further injury?

A: All athletic activity comes with inherent risks. Our goal is to help students, athletes and others recognize the symptoms of concussions and to be mindful of the need for patience and care in their recovery. That's why we've established the organization Cleared to Play. Because many concussions are missed or inappropriately treated, we seek to raise awareness of concussion prevention and treatment and provide appropriate medical support for local high school and college athletes. We are committed to raising funds through Cleared To Play so that these athletes have the same access to state of the art technology and diagnostic tools as the professionals, including treatment guidelines that oversee an athlete's care from an injury on the field, to the local Emergency Room, follow up evaluations in our offices, post-concussion ImPact™ testing, 5 staged rehabilitation protocols, and final clearance by one of our certified physicians for return to play.

Sean Lager, MD is a member of the medical staff of Bayonne Medical Center, Christ Hospital and Hoboken University Medical Center, and is a board certified, sports medicine fellowship trained, orthopedic surgeon. In 2012, he received his subspecialty certification from the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery for Sports Medicine, joining a select number of distinguished Sports Medicine specialists in the United States. In 2010, Dr. Lager founded ClearedToPlay.Org, Inc., a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting concussion awareness and treatment. Cleared To Play organizes and pays for pre-season baseline ImPact testing for thousands of New Jersey athletes. More information about Dr. Lager can be found at www.gothamcityorthopedics.com.