

The Carolina Bears

Concussion Recognition and Response Protocol

Purpose

The Carolina Bears is committed to protecting the health and safety of every athlete. Because concussions are serious brain injuries, any athlete suspected of having sustained a concussion will be removed from participation immediately and will not return until medically cleared.

Recognize

A concussion may result from a blow to the head, neck, or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull.

Coaches, Team Moms, volunteers, and parents should watch for signs including:

- Headache or pressure in the head
- Dizziness or loss of balance
- Confusion or difficulty following instructions
- Appearing dazed or stunned
- Memory problems
- Blurred or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Nausea or vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Unusual behavior or personality changes
- Excessive sleepiness
- Loss of consciousness (even briefly)

Remove

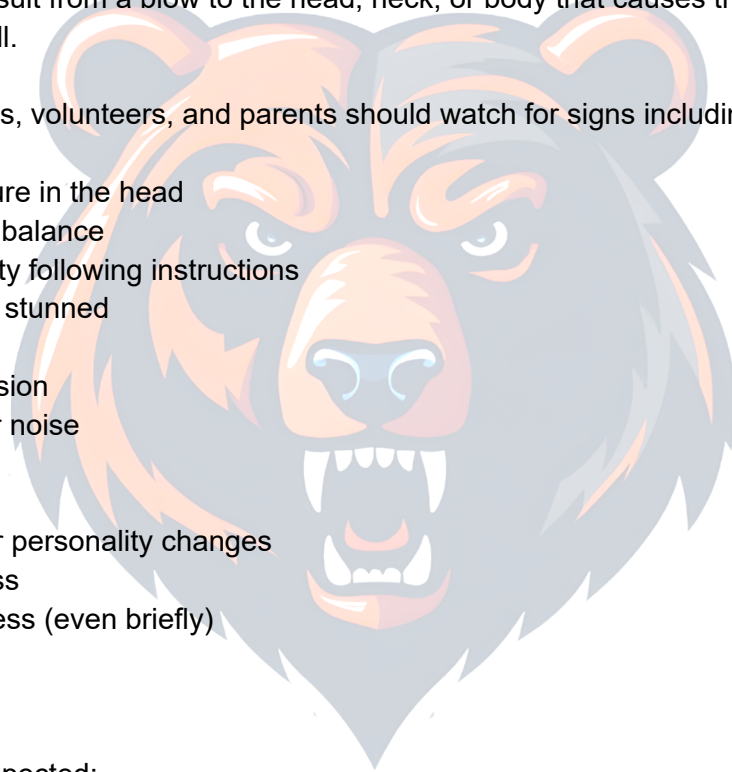
If a concussion is suspected:

- **The athlete will be removed from practice or competition immediately.**
- **The athlete will not return to play the same day.**
- **When in doubt, sit them out.**
- **Coaches and volunteers should never attempt to diagnose a concussion.**

Notify

The Head Coach or Team Mom will:

- Notify the athlete's parent or guardian immediately.



- Explain the observed signs or symptoms.
- Recommend prompt evaluation by a licensed healthcare provider.

Emergency Response

Call 911 immediately if the athlete experiences:

- Loss of consciousness lasting more than a few seconds
- Repeated vomiting
- Seizure activity
- Difficulty breathing
- Increasing confusion or inability to recognize people
- Severe or worsening headache
- Weakness, numbness, or inability to move normally
- Unequal pupil size
- Any condition that appears life-threatening

Until emergency personnel arrive:

- Keep the athlete calm.
- Do not allow them to return to activity.
- Do not give food, drink, or medication unless directed by emergency personnel.
- Avoid unnecessary movement if a neck injury is suspected.

Return to Play

An athlete may return only after:

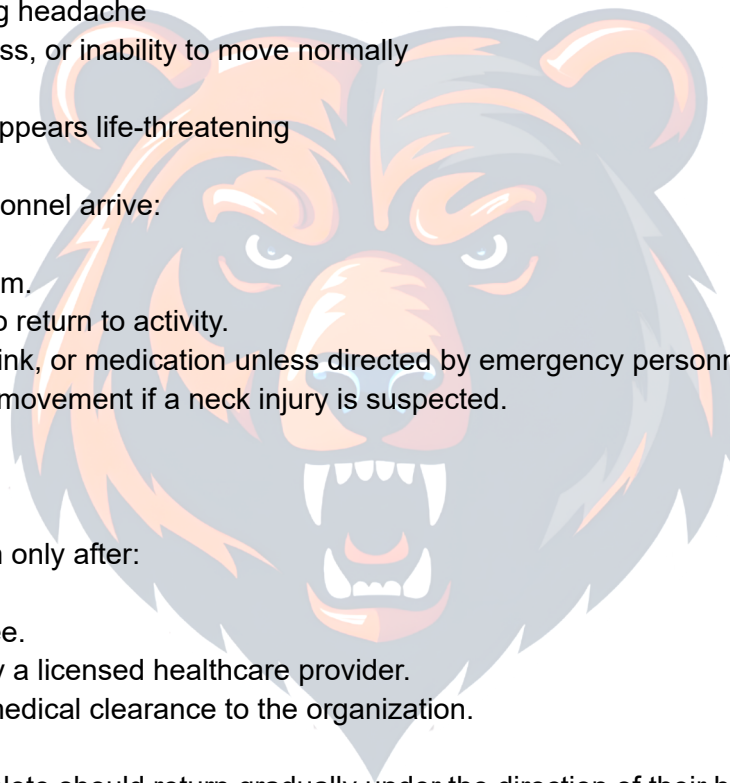
1. Being symptom-free.
2. Being evaluated by a licensed healthcare provider.
3. Providing written medical clearance to the organization.

Once cleared, the athlete should return gradually under the direction of their healthcare provider. Coaches may reduce practice intensity during the athlete's first several sessions back.

Documentation

The Head Coach or Team Mom should document:

- Date and time of injury
- Practice or game location
- Description of the incident
- Observed signs and symptoms
- Parent/guardian notification



- Whether EMS was contacted
- Date medical clearance was received

Responsibilities

Coaches

- Prioritize athlete safety over competition.
- Remove any athlete suspected of a concussion immediately.
- Never pressure an athlete to continue playing.

Team Moms

- Assist with parent communication.
- Help document the incident.
- Maintain copies of medical clearance.

Parents

- Seek medical evaluation promptly.
- Follow all medical recommendations.
- Provide written clearance before the athlete returns.

Commitment

The Carolina Bears believes no game is more important than the health of a child. Athlete safety will always take priority over participation or competition.

