

WellStar Spalding Regional Hospital Concussion Protocol

WellStar Spalding Regional Hospital Concussion Protocol gives the following signs/symptoms to generally determine the severity of a concussion, and the appropriate action and referral procedure.

Mild Concussion Signs/Symptoms

No Loss of Consciousness
Amnesia lasting less than 15 minutes
Nausea
Headache
Dizziness
Photophobia (sensitivity to light)
Tinnitus (ringing in ear)

Moderate to Severe Concussion Signs/Symptoms

Loss of consciousness
Amnesia lasting more than 15 minutes
Deterioration of neurological symptoms
Decreasing level of consciousness
Decreasing or irregular levels of respiration
Decrease or irregularity of pulse
Increase in blood pressure
Unequal, dilated, or unreactive pupils
Cranial nerve deficits
Seizure
Vomiting
Change in mental status
The increase of any Mild Concussion Symptom

Referral Parameters

Mild Concussions require being seen by a medical doctor, documentation should be given to the school's Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC).

Moderate to Severe Concussions require immediate referral to a medical doctor and the athlete must have a medical doctor provide documentation for return to play. This documentation must also be given to the school's ATC.

Athletes with multiple concussions within one year of each other require a medical doctor's release to return to play. Documentation of this must be given to the school's ATC.

Return to Play

All concussions require a minimum of 7 days before return to play. Also, all concussions require passing exertion tests before return to play. There are three steps to the exertion tests and each step must occur on a different day and in order. If any step is failed, then you must return to Step 1. The exertion testing can begin before the 7 day window is completed.

Step 1: No symptoms of a concussion while at rest. The athlete must go an entire day without any symptoms and must check in with the school's ATC to be put through concussion testing. If no symptoms reoccur before, during, or after this session and if the concussion testing reveals no abnormalities then the athlete has passed step 1.

Step 2: The school's ATC will monitor a light exercise session with the athlete. This exertion test will involve long breaks and low-intensity exercises. At the end of the exercise session the school's ATC will perform concussion testing on the athlete. If no symptoms reoccur before, during, or after the exercise session and if the concussion testing reveals no abnormalities then the athlete has passed step 2.

Step 3: The school's ATC will monitor a strenuous exercise session with the athlete. This exertion test will involve shorter breaks and higher intensity exercises. At the end of the exercise session the school's ATC will perform concussion testing on the athlete. If no symptoms reoccur before, during, or after the exercise session and if the concussion testing reveals no abnormalities then the athlete has passed step 3.

The purpose of exertion testing prior to return to play for concussions is to increase stress, heart rate, breathing, etc. which causes symptoms that may be hidden at rest to become apparent.