A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury with both physical and functional components. It is caused by a blow to the head/body, a rapid twisting motion or whiplash that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth.

**Signs & Symptoms**
*Signs: observable clues witnessed by staff, roommates, or teammates that a person may be suffering a concussion.*
- **Physical**
  - Dazed or vacant look
  - Decreased playing ability
  - Facial injury following head trauma
  - Grabbing or clutching the head
  - Lying motionless on the ground or slow to get up
  - Poor coordination or balance

- **Cognitive**
  - Confusion
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Easily distracted
  - Slow reaction/response time

- **Emotional/Behavioral**
  - Strange or inappropriate reactions

*Symptoms: feelings and sensations reported by person who has a concussion (athletes).*
- **Physical**
  - Blurred or double vision
  - Dizziness or problems with balance
  - Fatigue or feeling tired
  - Feeling “off” or not right
  - Headache or feeling pressure in the head
  - Neck Pain
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Seeing stars or flashes of flight

- **Cognitive**
  - Confusion
  - Difficulty concentrating or remembering
  - Feeling dazed or “in a fog”
  - Slowed down, fatigue, low energy

- **Emotional/Behavioral**
  - Irritable, sad, more emotional than usual
  - Nervous, Anxious, depressed

Any athlete who sustains a significant blow to the head, neck, or body followed by ANY one or a combination of concussion signs or symptoms should be removed from participation and evaluated for a concussion by a medical professional. It is not necessary for a person to exhibit all or even most of the common signs & symptoms to have a concussion.

Some concussions will show signs and symptoms right away, while others may take 24-28 hours, and sometimes longer, for the injury to be noticed by those experiencing it or those around them.

**Red Flags: Call 911**
Call 911 if one or more of the following danger signs are present:
- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Severe or increasing headache
- Seizure or convulsion
- Loss of consciousness
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Vomiting
- Increasingly restless, agitating or combative

What should I do if I think I have a concussion?
- **Don’t hide it.** When in doubt, sit it out! Tell your friends, roommates, and/or teammates. If you have ANY of the above symptoms you should not participate in physical activity until you have been evaluated by a medical professional. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself.
- **Get checked out** if you, your teammate or your friend think you may have a concussion. It is your responsibility to contact a medical professional within 24 hours of the incident.
- **Take time to recover.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. The decision about return to play is a medical decision that must be made by a healthcare provider.

Athletes with suspected concussion should NOT be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours), drink alcohol, use recreational/prescription/over the counter pain relievers/drugs, be sent home by themselves (they need to be with a responsible adult) or drive a motor vehicle (until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional).

This handout has been provided to you by Campus Recreation for information purposes only and should not be considered a replacement for a medical examination or diagnosis.