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call: (612) 873-9800

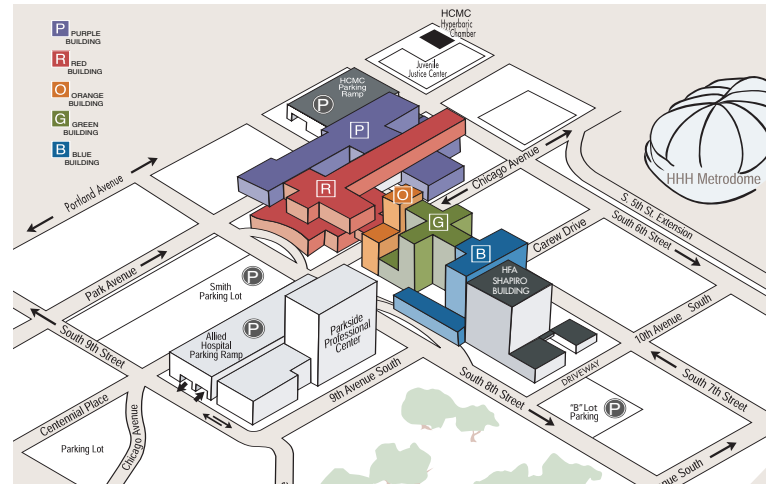
## When should a player be referred to a comprehensive TBI program?

When post-concussive symptoms persist longer than 24 hours or when there is a loss of consciousness, the athlete should be referred to physicians or other health care professionals who are trained to evaluate the severity of the traumatic brain injury.

The goal of the Mild to Moderate TBI Clinic is to thoroughly evaluate each individual's concussion and make recommendations to patients, family members and/or athletic coaches about how the injury is healing and when it is appropriate to return to normal physical activity and sports participation.

Our physicians utilize a multidisciplinary team of health care professionals to evaluate and treat traumatic brain injuries. These professionals can include speech pathology, neuropsychology, clinical psychology, vestibular therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, therapeutic recreation, nursing, and social work.

The lead physician will coordinate services, answer questions, and guide the athlete through his or her recovery. Return to sports will be determined following clinical evaluations, therapy when necessary, and resolution of the patient's symptoms.



## Information and referrals

To refer a patient or for more information, contact the Mild to Moderate Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic at **(612) 873-2595**.

**Traumatic Brain Injury Center**  
716 South 7th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

[www.hcmc.org/braininjury](http://www.hcmc.org/braininjury)



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## Guidelines for returning to sports and recreation following traumatic brain injury



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## Definition of mild traumatic brain injury or concussion

Concussion is another word for mild traumatic brain injury (TBI). Concussion may occur during supervised athletic sports and unsupervised recreation participation. Any loss of consciousness, mental status change, or post traumatic amnesia following a blow to the head is, by definition, a TBI.

When the brain is injured it can take a long time to heal. Involvement in contact or other sports that carry a risk for concussion is not recommended until the brain has healed. No two concussions are exactly alike. Generally, the more severe the concussion, the longer it will take to heal. Also, multiple concussions within the same year can keep an athlete from any sports participation.

## Assessment

When a TBI is witnessed, a standardized assessment of the severity is generally administered by a team physician, a professional athletic trainer, emergency services personnel, or coaching staff. These sideline tools are used to evaluate the symptoms present at the time of the TBI and to prompt emergency medical action when appropriate.

There are over 20 different scales used with high school, college and professional sports to estimate concussion severity and return to sports following concussion. There are differences between these scales. What they all agreed on is that there should be no return to contact sports or activity that causes physical exertion until all symptoms of the TBI are completely recovered. Post-concussive symptoms are a clear sign that the brain is not yet fully healed.

Assessment of concussion can be difficult to obtain because symptoms can change after a sideline assessment. In addition, athletes often try to hide their symptoms because they want to continue play.

## Symptoms

Concussion symptoms can either be reported by the athlete or observed by others. Symptoms do not always occur immediately after the injury; it is very common for symptoms to occur hours or even days following an injury. There are many different types of symptoms, which can be divided into physical, cognitive, and emotional categories.

### Physical symptoms can include:

- Headache
- Dizziness or balance deficit
- Fatigue or drowsiness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Nausea or vomiting
- Incoordination
- Blurred vision or diplopia
- Photophobia or phonophobia

### Cognitive symptoms can include:

- Poor concentration
- Short-term memory loss
- Difficulty finding words
- Trouble with multitasking
- Change in school performance

### Emotional difficulties can include:

- Irritability
- Lability
- Anxiety
- Depression

Loss of consciousness does not always indicate severity of brain injury. Mild brain injuries can occur without any loss of consciousness. With all cases of concussion involving adolescents, the parents should be informed of the incident and should be given instructions to monitor the athlete for symptoms.