

CONCUSSIONS AND STUDENT ATHLETES

Fact Sheet for Parents/Legal Guardians and Student Athletes

Note: Parents/Legal guardians and student athletes are required to read and sign this form. Return this form to the appropriate team coach.

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that is caused by a bump or blow to the head. It can change the way your brain normally works. It can occur during practices or games in any sport. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. A concussion can happen even if you haven’t been knocked out. You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Parent/Legal guardian’s responsibility

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion.

- appears dazed, stunned or disoriented; demonstrates decreased alertness
- experiences short-term memory difficulty
- forgets an instruction
- is unsure of game, score or opponent
- moves clumsily
- answers questions slowly or slurs words
- loses consciousness (even briefly)
- shows behavior or personality changes
- can’t recall events prior to being hit or falling
- can’t recall events after being hit or falling
- experiences seizures or vomiting

Every sport is different, but there are steps your child can take to protect him/herself from concussion.

- Ensure that your son/daughter follows his/her coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage your son/daughter to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure he/she wears the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

What should a parent/legal guardian do if he/she thinks their child has a concussion?

- Seek medical attention right away. A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports. Notify your child's coach if you think your child has a concussion.

- Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon - while the brain is still healing - risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion in ANY sport or activity. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

Student athletes

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- headache or "pressure" in head
- nausea or vomiting
- balance problems or dizziness
- double or blurry vision
- bothered by light
- bothered by noise
- feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- difficulty paying attention
- memory problems
- confusion
- does not "feel right"

What should an athlete do if he/she thinks they have a concussion?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical checkup.** A doctor or health care professional can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.
- **It is better to miss one game than the whole season.**

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Legal guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit: {HYPERLINK "http://www.cdc.gov/injury"} or {HYPERLINK "http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports"}.