

Concussions Facts Sheet

for Parents/Legal Guardians and Student Athletes

Note: Parents/legal guardians and student athletes are required to read this form.

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 the 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 the individual hasn’t been knocked out. You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after an 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/or 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 himself/herself from a 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 the activity (such as shin 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 his/her child has suffered a concussion?

- Seek medical attention right away. A healthcare professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports participation. Notify your child’s coach if you think your child has had a concussion.
- Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play until a healthcare 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 subsequent concussions can be very serious—they can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime. (OVER)
- 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 Athlete's Responsibility

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- headache or “pressure” in head
- nausea and/or vomiting
- balance or problems with dizziness
- double or blurry vision
- bothered by light
- bothered by noise
- feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- difficulty paying attention
- memory problems
- confusion
- feeling “not right”

What should a student athlete do if he/she thinks he/she has had a concussion?

- **Tell your coach 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 suffered a concussion.
- **Get a medical checkup.** A doctor or healthcare professional can tell you if you have had 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; and second or subsequent concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or healthcare professional to return to play.
- **It is better to miss one game than the whole season.**

Return To Practice and Play (RTP)

- A student athlete who has been removed from play due to a suspected concussion or other head injury must be evaluated by a doctor and be cleared to return to play and practice.
- Any student athlete determined to be concussed may not return to play on the same day of injury.
- A student athlete with a suspected concussion is only to be released to the direct care of his/her parent/legal guardian unless emergency transportation is necessary.
- The parent/legal guardian of a student athlete determined to be concussed will be contacted and counseled regarding management of the injury.
- A student athlete who has been cleared to return to practice or play must obtain from his/her physician an appropriate graduated RTP protocol as well as any specific instructions concerning classroom work.
- The athletic director reserves the right to require a doctor's note for any head injury even if a concussion is not suspected. The note must state when the student is cleared to return to practice and play.