

CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Even a “ding”, “getting you bell rung”, or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions can occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms can show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION:

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:	
Headaches	Amnesia
Pressure in head	Don’t feel right
Nausea or vomiting	Fatigue or low energy
Neck pain	Sadness
Balance problems or dizziness	Nervousness or anxiety
Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision	Irritability
Sensitivity to light or noise	More emotional
Feeling sluggish or slowed down	Confusion
Feeling foggy or groggy	Concentration or memory problems
Drowsiness	(forgetting game plays)
Change in sleep patterns	Repeating the same question or comment
Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:	
Appears dazed	
Vacant facial expression	
Confused about assignment	
Forgets plays	
Is unsure of game, score, or opponent	
Moves clumsily or displays a lack of coordination	
Answers questions slowly	
Slurred speech	
Shows behavior or personality changes	
Can’t recall events prior to hit	
Can’t recall events after hit	
Seizures or convulsions	
Any change in typical behavior or personality	
Loses consciousness	

DID YOU KNOW?

- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- Signs and symptoms can show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear.

- Athletes who have, at any point in their lives, had a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion.
- Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults.

CONCUSSION DANGER SIGNS:

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body she/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:

One pupil larger than the other	A headache that gets worse
Is drowsy or cannot be awakened	Repeated vomiting or nausea
Slurred speech	Convulsions or seizures
Cannot recognize people or places	Has unusual behavior
Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination	
Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated	
Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)	

WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF MY CHILD KEEPS ON PLAYING?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete's safety.

IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS SUFFERED A CONCUSSION:

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The Return-to Play Policy of the IESA and IHSA requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches, prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to the same contest. In accordance with state law, all schools are required to follow this policy.

Adapted from the CDC and the 3rd international Conference on Concussion in Sport
 Document assembled from CDC documents created on 7/1/2012 Reviewed 4/24/2013 and The "Heads
 Up" Parent & Athlete Concussion Information Sheet