

Parent/Athlete Concussion Information Sheet

A concussion is a kind of brain injury. It can be caused by a bump or hit to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force that shakes the head. Concussions can appear in any sport, and can look differently in each person.

Most concussions get better with rest and over 90% of athletes fully recover. However, all concussions should be considered serious. If not recognized and managed the right way, they may result in problems including brain damage and even death.

Most concussions occur without being knocked out. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours to appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion or if you notice some symptoms and signs, seek medical evaluation from your team's athletic trainer and a medical doctor trained in the evaluation and management of concussion. If your child is vomiting, has a severe headache, or is having difficulty staying awake or answering simple questions, call 911 to take him or her immediately to the emergency department of your local hospital.

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns to soon after getting a concussion?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. There is NO same day return to play for a youth with a suspected concussion. Youth athletes may take more time to recover from concussion and are more prone to long-term serious problems from a concussion.

Even though a traditional brain scan (e.g., MRI or CT) may be "normal," the brain has still been injured. Animal and human research studies show that a second blow before the brain has recovered can result in serious damage to the brain. If your athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one, this can lead to prolonged recovery (weeks to months), or even to severe brain swelling (Second Impact Syndrome) with devastating consequences.

There is an increasing concern that head impact exposure and recurrent concussions may contribute to long-term neurological problems. One goal of this concussion program is to prevent a too early return to play so that serious brain damage can be prevented.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches • "Pressure in head" • Nausea or vomiting • Neck pain • Balance problems or dizziness • Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision • Bothered by light or noise • Feeling sluggish or slowed down • Feeling foggy or groggy • Drowsiness • Change in sleep patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of memory • "Don't feel right" • Tired or low energy • Sadness • Nervousness or feeling on edge • Irritability • More emotional • Confusion • Concentration or memory problems • Repeating the same question/comment |
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Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks dizzy • Looks spaced out • Confused about plays • Forgets plays • Is unsure of game, score, or opponent • Moves clumsily or awkwardly • Answers questions slowly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slurred speech • Shows a change in personality or way of acting • Can't recall events before or after the injury • Seizures or has a fit • Any change in typical behavior or personality • Passes out

What is Return to Learn?

Following a concussion, student athletes may have difficulties with short- and long-term memory, concentration and organization. They will require rest while recovering from injury (e.g., avoid reading, texting, video games, loud movies), and may even need to stay home from school for a few days. As they return to school, the schedule might need to start with a few classes or a half-day depending on how they feel. If recovery from a concussion is taking longer than expected, they may also benefit from a reduced class schedule and/or limited homework; a formal school assessment may also be necessary. Your school or doctor can help suggest and make these changes. Student athletes should complete the Return to Learn guidelines and return to complete school before beginning any sports or physical activities, unless your doctor makes other recommendations. Go to the CIF website (cifstate.org) for more information on Return to Learn.

How is Return to Play (RTP) determined?

Concussion symptoms should be completely gone before returning to competition. A RTP progression involves a gradual, step-wise increase in physical effort, sports-specific activities and the risk for contact. If symptoms occur with activity, the progression should be stopped. If there are no symptoms the next day, exercise can be restarted at the previous stage.

RTP after concussion should occur only with medical clearance from a medical doctor trained in the evaluation and management of concussions, and a step-wise progression program monitored by an athletic trainer, coach, or other identified school administrator. Please see cifstate.org for a graduated return to play plan. *[AB 2127, a California state law effective 1/1/15, states that return to play (i.e., full competition) must be no sooner than 7 days after the concussion diagnosis has been made by a physician.]*

If you suspect that your child has a concussion, remove them from play and seek medical attention.
It's better to miss one game than miss the whole season.

For more information on concussions, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/index.html>

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Student-athlete Name (Printed)	Student-athlete Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Parent or Guardian (Printed)	Parent or Guardian Signature	Date