

# CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a "ding", "getting your bell rung", or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of 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.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

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 or stunned
- Forgets an instruction
- Moves clumsily
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Nausea or vomiting
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to noise
- Concentration or memory problems
- Does not "feel right"
- Can't recall events prior to or after hit or fall
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Answers questions slowly
- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Sensitivity to light
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Confusion
- Shows behavior or personality changes

## HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

- Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.
- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear 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 YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR 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.
- 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 damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion. Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

## WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION?

- Any athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from the activity at that time and for the remainder of the day.
- Any athlete who has been removed may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and has received a written clearance to return to play from the health care provider.

## LET YOUR CHILD'S COACH KNOW RIGHT AWAY IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION AND CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN!

Adapted from the CDC. For more information you can go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports>

# CONCUSSION

## A Fact Sheet for Coaches

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a blow to the head or body.
  - From contact with another player, hitting a hard surface such as the ground, ice or floor, or being hit by a piece of equipment such as a bat, lacrosse stick or field hockey ball.
- Can change the way your brain normally works.
- Can range from mild to severe.
- Presents itself differently for each athlete.
- Can occur during practice or competition in ANY sport.
- **Can happen even if you do not lose consciousness.**

### CIF Bylaw 313 – Play It Safer

A student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time for the remainder of the day. A student-athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury. Concussion symptoms include:

- Amnesia.
- Confusion.
- Headache.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Balance problems or dizziness.
- Double or fuzzy vision.
- Sensitivity to light or noise.
- Nausea (feeling that you might vomit).
- "Don't feel right."
- Feeling sluggish, foggy or groggy.
- Feeling unusually irritable.
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays, facts, meeting times).
- Slowed reaction time.

Exercise or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games may cause concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness) to reappear or get worse.

### WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF I KEEP PLAYING A STUDENT WITH A CONCUSSION OR RETURNS TOO SOON?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately (CIF Bylaw 313). 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 athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries and concussions are no different. It is your duty as a coach to place the health and safety of your student-athletes ahead of winning.

### WHAT A COACH SHOULD DO IF YOU THINK YOUR PLAYER HAS SUFFERED A CONCUSSION

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion **must** 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 written medical clearance. The new "CIF Bylaw 313" now requires the consistent and uniform implementation of long and well-established return to play concussion guidelines that help ensure and protect the health of student-athletes. A coach's job is to ensure everyone follows these guidelines.



**IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.  
WHEN IN DOUBT, GET CHECKED OUT.**



For more information and resources, visit [www.cifstate.org/health\\_safety/](http://www.cifstate.org/health_safety/) & [www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion)

