

## **CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET**

A concussion is a brain injury, and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. In other words, even a “ding” or a seemingly minor bump on the head can be serious. You cannot see a concussion, and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up immediately after the injury or may take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Younger athletes—and in particular adolescent or teenage athletes—often will underreport symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents or guardians, and players is the key for these athletes’ safety.

### **Potential Signs/Symptoms:**

- Headaches
- “Pressure in head”
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- Amnesia
- “Don’t feel right”
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability
- More emotional than usual
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Repeating the same question/comment

### **Potential signs observed by teammates, parents or guardians, and coaches include:**

- Appears dazed
- Vacant facial expression

- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily or displays incoordination
- 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

### **What can happen if my child keeps playing with a concussion or returns too soon?**

Athletes with the signs or 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.

For a discrete period of time after a concussion occurred, there is an increased risk of significant damage, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. A second hit can lead to prolonged recovery and even to severe brain swelling ("second impact syndrome") with devastating or even fatal consequences.

### **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 "Zackery Lystedt Law" in Washington requires the consistent and uniform implementation of long and well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years. It includes the following instructions:

"a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time [and . . . ] 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 received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider."

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember: it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>

**As noted above, if your child suffers a concussion they will need written medical clearance from their physician before they can return to participation in practices or games.**

Adapted from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport Document created 6/15/2009.