



Concussion and Head Injury Information Sheet

Why am I getting this information sheet?

You are receiving this information sheet about concussions because of California state law AB 2007 (effective January 1, 2017), Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 124235) of Chapter 4 of Part 2 of Division 106 of the Health and Safety Code, which requires the following:

- An athlete who may have a concussion during a practice or game shall be removed from the activity for the remainder of the day.
- Any athlete removed for this reason must receive a written note from a licensed medical care provider before returning to practice.
- Before an athlete can start the season and begin practice, a concussion information sheet must be signed and returned to the club by the athlete and the parent or guardian.
- Every year all coaches involved in the club are required to receive training or information about concussions and head injuries.

What is a concussion and how would I recognize one?

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 athlete 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 athlete 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 an athlete keeps playing with concussion symptoms or returns too 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.

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

- Looks dizzy • Slurred speech • Looks spaced out • Shows a change in personality or way of acting
- Confused about plays • Can't recall events before or after the injury • Forgets plays • Seizures or has a fit • Is unsure of game, score, or opponent • Any change in typical behavior or personality • Moves clumsily or awkwardly • Passes out • Answers questions slowly

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Headaches • Loss of memory • "Pressure in head" • "Don't feel right" • Nausea or throws up • Tired or low energy • Neck pain • Sadness • Has trouble standing or walking • Nervousness or feeling on edge
- Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision • Irritability • Bothered by light or noise • More emotional • Feeling sluggish or slowed down • Confused • Feeling foggy or groggy • Concentration or memory problems
- Drowsiness • Repeating the same question/comment • Change in sleep patterns

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.

References:

- American Medical Society for Sports Medicine position statement: concussion in sport (2013)
- Consensus statement on concussion in sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich, November 2012
- <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>