

## **Concussion Fact Sheet**

### **ATHLETE, PARENT & COACH**

The signs of a serious head injury, such as a concussion or epidural hematoma, don't always appear immediately. Sometimes the warning signs of a head injury don't show up for several hours or even days later. **Even a minor blow to the head can result in a serious head injury that, if left untreated, can result in life-threatening complications.** A concussion may cause a change in a person's mental status at the time of the injury, including, but not limited to, feeling dazed, disoriented, or confused, and may or may not involve a loss of consciousness. A concussion may be caused by any type of accident or injury including, but not limited to, the following: a fall, a blow, bump or jolt to the head or body, and/or the shaking or spinning and deceleration of the head.

### **Concussion Facts**

---

- A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that affects how your brain works.
- Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head, or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. 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 can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury.
- If you suspect a concussion has occurred, the participant's parents should be immediately notified.
- A suspected concussion player should seek medical attention immediately.
- A suspected concussed player may not return to play on the day of the injury.
- The athlete may only return to play with permission from a health care professional (MD or DO) experienced in evaluating for concussions. (Medical Clearance to Return to Play form must be completed by Doctor and presented to the coach upon return.)
- Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness
- 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.
- During recovery from a concussion, exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration (such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games) may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse.
- Unlike with some other injuries, playing or practicing with concussion symptoms is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery and a delay in your return to play.
- 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.
- If an athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. While an athlete's brain is still healing, s/he is much more likely to have another concussion.
- Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover.
- In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to their brain. They can even be fatal.
- Ignoring symptoms of a concussion and trying to "tough it out" often makes symptoms worse.
- Don't let anyone pressure you into continuing to participate if you believe you are suffering from a concussion.
- The sooner an athlete is checked out, the sooner the athlete may be able to safely return.
- Take care of your brain. A concussion can affect one's ability to do schoolwork and other activities. Most athletes with a concussion get better and return to sports, but it is important to rest and give your brain time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs while your brain is still healing can cause long-term problems that may change your life forever.

**Symptoms – Concussion symptoms differ with each person and with each injury, and may not be noticeable for hours or days. Symptoms include:**

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”
- Forgets an instruction
- Difficulty remembering or paying attention
- Feeling irritable, more emotional, or “down”
- Slowed reaction time
- Sleep problems
- Loss of Consciousness (most concussions occur without loss of consciousness)

Signs – Observed by parents/guardians/coach: If your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs of a concussion. Those signs in bold (dark black) are considered danger signs and the child should be seen in an emergency department right away:

- Appears dazed, stunned or confused
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes (becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated)
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall
- Forgets an instruction
- Vomiting or nausea
- **One pupil larger than the other**
- **Drowsy or cannot be awakened**
- **A headache that gets worse or doesn't go away**
- **Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination**
- **Convulsions or seizures**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Difficulty recognizing people or places**
- **Exhibits unusual behavior**
- **Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation**
- **Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)**
- **Repeated vomiting or nausea**

## What should you do if you suspect a concussion?

### Athlete:

If you believe you have the symptoms of a concussion, tell your parents, and/or coach immediately. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, and playing video games, may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. Youth who return to play too soon – while the brain is still healing – risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting you for a lifetime. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional.

Remember that concussions affect people differently. While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

### Coach:

If you suspect that one of your players sustained a concussion, you **MUST** remove the athlete from play and notify the parent immediately indicating that you suspect a concussion. (You can use the Emergency Medical Form or Registration Form for parent contact information.) Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself.

Present the parent with a Medical Clearance to Return to Play form and an Accident Report form to complete.

For the Medical Clearance to Return to Play form, request that they seek medical attention and advise them that their athlete may not return to play on the same day and that s/he must present to you the completed Medical Clearance to Return to Play form completed by their doctor before they will be allowed return to participate (practice or game).

The parent also needs to complete the Accident Report form and submit to the Parks & Recreation Director's office within 24 hours following the injury. If the office is closed, an after-hours drop box is located near the entry doors of the Twp. Offices for their convenience.

Coaches also need to complete a copy of the Accident Report form (practice or game) and submit to the Parks & Recreation office within 24 hours of the injury occurring. Again, the after-hours drop box is available for your convenience, if needed. You must also call the Parks & Recreation Director with information on the athlete's injury (Becky Goodwin 410-5895) immediately following the event in which the injury took place.

### **Parent:**

If your athlete's coach suspects a concussion, you will be notified immediately and presented with a Medical Clearance to Return to Play form and Accident Report Form.

Please complete the Accident Report Form and return to the Bath Twp. Offices within 24 hours. In the event that the office is closed, an after-hour's drop box is located near the entry doors of the Twp. Offices for your convenience. The Medical Clearance to Return to Play form must be completed by a Dr. (DO or MD). This form must be presented to your athlete's coach before s/he can return to participate. Never can an athlete return to participate on the same day as the injury occurred.

In the event of a diagnosed concussion by your physician (DO or MD), follow your doctor's orders.

### **How can a youth prevent a concussion or other serious brain injury?**

Follow the coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.

Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

Wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly and be well maintained.

For programs utilizing a helmet, wearing a helmet is a must to reduce the risk of a serious brain injury or skull fracture. There is no “concussion-proof” helmet and they are not designed to prevent a concussion. Therefore, even with a helmet, it is important for athletes to avoid hits to the head.

**Returning after a concussion:**

Athletes who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed
- Spend fewer hours at school
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments
- Receive help with schoolwork
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer

Parents - Communicate with teachers, school nurses, coaches, speech-language pathologists, or counselors about your athlete’s concussion and symptoms. As your child’s symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually.

**Safety Comes First!**

**Don’t hide it, report it.**

**Get checked out.**

**Take Care of your Brain.**