



## 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 bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can 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.

**Symptoms may include one or more of the following:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• “Pressure in head”</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Neck pain</li> <li>• Has trouble standing or walking</li> <li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li> <li>• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li> <li>• Feeling sluggish or slowed down</li> <li>• Feeling foggy or groggy</li> <li>• Drowsiness</li> <li>• Change in sleep patterns</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amnesia</li> <li>• “Don’t feel right”</li> <li>• Fatigue or low energy</li> <li>• Sadness</li> <li>• Nervousness or anxiety</li> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• More emotional</li> <li>• Confused</li> <li>• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)</li> <li>• Repeating the same question/comment</li> </ul> |
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**Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:**

- Looks dizzy
- Appears dazed
- Vacant facial expression
- Confused about assignment (i.e. 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 injury
- Can’t recall events after injury
- Seizures or convulsions
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Passes out

### **Why am I getting this information sheet?**

You are receiving this information sheet about concussions because of Maryland state law AB 25 (effective January 1, 2012), now Education Code § 49475:

1. *The law requires a student athlete who may have a concussion during a practice or game to be removed from the activity for the remainder of the day.*
2. *Any athlete removed for this reason must receive a written note from a medical doctor trained in the management of concussion before returning to practice.*
3. *Before an athlete can start the season and begin practice in a sport, a concussion information sheet must be signed and returned to the school by the athlete and the parent or guardian.*

Every 2 years all coaches are required to receive training about concussions (AB 1451), as well as certification in First Aid training, CPR, and AEDs (life-saving electrical devices that can be used during CPR).

### **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 (see front of this page) 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.

On the CIF website is a **Graded Concussion Symptom Checklist**

([http://www.cifsds.org/uploads/2/3/3/6/23368454/cif\\_graded\\_concussion\\_symptom\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.cifsds.org/uploads/2/3/3/6/23368454/cif_graded_concussion_symptom_checklist.pdf)).

If your child fills this form out after having had a concussion, it helps the doctor, athletic trainer or coach understand how he or she is feeling and hopefully shows improvement. The school asks that you have your child fill out the checklist at the start of the season even before a concussion has occurred so that the school can understand if some symptoms such as headache might be a part of his or her everyday life. This "baseline" assessment allows the school to understand which symptoms are normal and common for your child. Keep a copy for your records, and turn in the original. If a concussion occurs, your child should fill out this checklist daily. This Graded Symptom Checklist thus provides a list of symptoms to compare over time to make sure the athlete is recovering from the concussion.

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

*Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be immediately removed from play. There is NO same day return 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 the 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 and even fatal 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.

It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries. And concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete’s safety.

## **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. The school or your 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](http://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](http://cifstate.org) for a graduated return to play plan. *[SB 771 and HB 858, a Maryland state law effective 5/19/11, 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 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 Maryland Interscholastic Federation Bylaw 313 requires implementation of long and well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years:

**CIF Bylaw 313. CONCUSSION PROTOCOL**

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 education and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

***Q: What is meant by “licensed health care provider?”***

***A: The “scope of practice” for licensed health care providers and medical professionals is defined by Maryland state statutes. This scope of practice will limit the evaluation to a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO).***

Teach your child to tell the coaching staff if he or she experiences such symptoms, or if he or she suspects that a teammate has had a concussion. 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. 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/>

Student-athlete Name Printed	Student-athlete Signature	Date
Parent or Legal Guardian Printed	Parent or Legal Guardian Signature	Date
Parent or Legal Guardian Printed	Parent or Legal Guardian Signature	Date