

HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

A FACT SHEET FOR **ATHLETES**

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.
- Can change the way your brain normally works.
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport or recreational activity.
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged" or "had your bell rung."

All concussions are serious. A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities (such as playing video games, working on a computer, studying, driving, or exercising). Most people with a concussion get better, but it is important to give your brain time to heal.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice *one or more* of the symptoms listed below or that you "don't feel right" soon after, a few days after, or even weeks after the injury.

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion

What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach right away if you think you have a concussion or if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical check-up.** A doctor or other health care professional can tell if you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes for you to recover and may cause more damage to your brain. It is important to rest and not return to play until you get the OK from your health care professional that you are symptom-free.

How can I prevent a concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment. In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
 - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
 - Worn correctly and the correct size and fit
 - Used every time you play or practice
- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

**If you think you have a concussion:
Don't hide it. Report it. Take time to recover.**

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

For more information and to order additional materials *free-of-charge*, visit: www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



CONCUSSION RETURN TO PARTICIPATION PROTOCOL (RTP)
Administrative Regulation 1062.4

1. During the symptomatic periods, the student shall not engage in any physical or athletic activity. The student must have returned to full academic activity and received medical clearance prior to initiating the protocol for Return to Participating in Physical and Athletic Activity. All student athletes with a concussion must successfully complete the following RTP protocol before resuming full athletic activity.
2. Advancement through the protocol takes a minimum of six (6) days between steps one through six, with at least 24 hours between each step. However, the rate of progression through the steps in the protocol is meant to be individualized and therefore could take longer.
3. Factors indicative of a slower rate of return may include a younger student; history of previous concussions; the number, severity, and duration of concussion symptoms; and the concussions risk of the activities or sports to which the student will return. Physical or cognitive activity that provoked recurrence of concussive symptoms will delay recovery and increase the risk of future concussion. Therefore, if symptoms recur at any step, then physical activity should stop for 24 hours and resume at the previous step.
4. Protocol: The student begins at the baseline of no physical activity as long as the student experiences symptoms. The student could remain at this baseline for days or weeks. When the student is able to participate in academic activities without modifications, is symptom free for 24 hours and cleared by a qualified health care provider, student may progress to Step 1.

Step 1

- Light aerobic activity increasing heart rate for 10-15 minutes but not requiring cognitive attention or sustained concentration. Examples include: walking, swimming, and riding a stationary bike, but no resistance training.
- If no symptoms, then student may progress to Step 2 after 24 hours.
- If symptoms recur, cease physical activity for 24 hours.

Step 2

- Light to moderate aerobic activity for 30 minutes with limited body and head movement. Examples include jogging, more intense walking, swimming, riding a stationary bike, but no resistance training.
- If no symptoms, then student may progress to Step 3 after 24 hours.
- If symptoms recur, cease physical activity for 24 hours and resume at Step 1.

Step 3

- Moderate to heavy aerobic activity for 30 minutes but no contact. Examples include running, swimming, cycling, skating, Nordic skiing, but no resistance training.
- If no symptoms, then student may progress to Step 4 after 24 hours.
- If symptoms recur, cease physical activity for 24 hours and resume at Step 2.

Step 4

- Heavy aerobic activity for 30 minutes which may be intense but no contact. Examples include hard running, swimming, cycling, skating and, Nordic skiing.
- Resistance Training allowed (push-up, sit-up, weightlifting) for 15 minutes.
- If no symptoms, then student may progress to Step 5 after 24 hours.
- If symptoms recur, cease physical activity for 24 hours and resume at Step 3.

Step 5

- Return to practice, non-contact limited participation to routine, sport-specific drills.
- If no symptoms, then student may progress to Step 6 after 24 hours.
- If symptoms recur, cease physical activity for 24 hours and resume at Step 4.

Step 6

- Return to full contact practice.
- If no symptoms, then student may progress to Step 7 after 24 hours.
- If symptoms recur, cease physical activity for 24 hours and resume at Step 5.

Step 7

When a student completes the RTP protocol by returning to full contact practice without experiencing symptoms and is cleared by an athletic trainer, if available, or other qualified health care professional, student is medically eligible for competition. Student must meet ASAA eligibility criteria in order to return to competition (see School Board Policy and AR 955.21).