



### **What is a concussion or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)?**

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.
- Can change the way a student's brain normally works.
- Can occur during Practices and/or Contests in any sport.
- Can happen even if a student has **NOT** lost consciousness.
- Can be serious even if a student has just been "dinged" or "had their bell rung."

All concussions are serious. A concussion can affect a student's ability to do schoolwork and other activities (such as playing video games, working on a computer, studying, driving, or exercising). Most students with a concussion get better, but it is important to give the concussed student's brain time to heal. All concussions heal at a different rate. There is no timeframe as to the length an athlete will be out with a concussion.

### **What are the symptoms of a concussion?**

Concussions cannot be seen; however, in a potentially concussed student, **one or more** of the symptoms listed below may become apparent and/or that the student "doesn'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
- Mood changes

### **What should students do if they believe that they or someone else may have a concussion?**

- **Students feeling any of the symptoms set forth above should immediately tell their Athletic Trainer, Coach, School Nurse and their parents.** Also, if they notice any teammate evidencing such symptoms, they should immediately tell their Athletic Trainer and/or Coach.
- **The student should be evaluated.** A licensed physician of medicine or osteopathic medicine (MD or DO), sufficiently familiar with current concussion management, should examine the student, determine whether the student has a concussion, and determine when the student is cleared to return to participate in interscholastic athletics. We **STRONGLY** recommend the athlete be seen by their primary care physician or PCP for clearance and evaluation.
- **Concussed students should give themselves time to get better.** If a student has sustained a concussion, the student's brain needs time to heal. While a concussed student's brain is still healing, that student is much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes for an already concussed student to recover and may cause more damage to that student's brain. Such damage can have long term consequences. It is important that a concussed student rest and not return to play until the student receives permission from an MD or DO, sufficiently familiar with current concussion management, that the student is symptom-free.

**How can students prevent a concussion?** Every sport is different, but there are steps students can take to protect themselves.

- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment. For equipment to properly protect a student, it must be:
  - The right equipment for the sport, position, or activity;
  - Worn correctly and the correct size and fit; and
  - Used every time the student Practices and/or competes.
- Follow the Coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

**If a student believes they may have a concussion:** Don't hide it- report it. Take time to heal.



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Currently, your athlete has sustained a concussion on \_\_\_\_\_

They currently have or have had the following symptoms:

Headache

Nausea

Dizziness

Blurred vision

Ringing in the ears

Memory difficulty

Lethargic

Confusion

Noise or light sensitivity

If your athlete's symptoms worsen, continue for longer than 24-48 hours, or if they experience

- Seizures
- Amnesia
- Muscle tremors
- Nausea and vomiting

**CONSULT YOUR ATHLETE'S PRIMARY DOCTOR OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY!!**

As your athlete is recovering, they should have brain rest until symptoms subside. This includes:

- No texting or computer use
- Limited TV watching
- No reading
- Restrictions in school work

The school athletic trainer and/or guidance counselor will work together to assist the student to inform teachers of the athlete's symptoms and restrictions.

## **RETURNING TO PLAY:**

The Cole Memorial Athletic Trainers follow the protocol of the UPMC Concussion Center when returning an athlete back to play. These steps **MUST** be followed before your athlete can return to practice or game situations.

1. Complete a Post-Injury ImpACT test within 24 hours of the injury. If the injury occurs on Friday, the test must be completed Friday night or on Monday. All scores must have returned to baseline levels before the athlete can return to activity.



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2. Athlete must be symptom free for 24 hours before the gradual exertion rehabilitation protocol can be started. If symptoms return at any point during the rehab protocol, all activity is stopped until symptoms are gone for 24 hours and the protocol is restarted at Step 1.

Step 1: 15-20 minutes of light cardio exercise (walking on the treadmill) followed by full body stretching exercises

Step 2: 15-20 minutes of moderate cardio exercise (stationary bike, elliptical, fast-paced walking on treadmill) followed by stretching and balance exercises. Light weight lifting on machines (no free-weights at this point).

Step 3: 15-20 minutes of moderately aggressive cardio exercise (jogging on treadmill or track) followed by stretching, balance exercises, and weight lifting (can include free weights).

Step 4: Non-contact skill exercise or practice, including heavy weight lifting, functional skill exercise, jump roping, etc.

Step 5: Full practice or game activity. Athlete must have physician's release to return to activity.

These steps are done to return your athlete COMPLETELY AND SAFELY back to full activity following a concussion or mild traumatic brain injury. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the school.

Thank you.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ (athlete) have read and understand this concussion protocol. I understand that before I can return to play, I must complete a post-injury ImPACT test with results that return to my baseline scores. I then must complete the 5 Steps of gradual activity to return to play.

Signature of athlete: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (athlete's parent/guardian) have read and understand this concussion protocol. I understand that before my child can return to play, they must complete a post-injury ImPACT test with results that return to their baseline scores. Then they must complete the 5 Steps of gradual activity to return to play.

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*The bottom half of this page remains on file in the athletic training room.