

## CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

### FACTS FOR PARENTS

#### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild blow or bump to the head can be serious.

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear to be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

#### What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

##### Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness, even briefly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events before hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

##### Symptoms Reported by Athletes

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitive to lights or noises
- Dizziness, clumsiness, sleepiness
- Feels sluggish, hazy, foggy, groggy
- Attention, concentration problems
- Memory loss
- Confusion

#### How can you help your child prevent a concussion?

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

- Ensure they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times
- Make sure they wear the proper equipment for their activity (such as helmet padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should be the right equipment for the game, position, or activity; Worn correctly and fit well; used every time they play.

#### What should you do if you suspect your child has a concussion?

- Seek medical attention right away. A health care professional will be able to decide how severe the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
- Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's "ok." Children who return to play too soon while the brain is still healing risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion. Coaches should know if your child has a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.