

Concussion Information Sheet

Why am I getting this information Sheet?

You are getting this information sheet about concussions because of California state law AB 2007 (effective January 1, 2017), which applies to 27 youth sports organizations, including softball:

1. The law requires an 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 the sport of softball, a concussion information sheet must be signed by the athlete and parent/guardian and returned to their league/team.

All coaches are required to receive training about concussions annually.

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 sport.

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 concussions (see following 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 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/her immediately to the emergency department of your local hospital.

On the USA Softball of Southern California website is a Graded Concussion Symptom Checklist. If your child fills out this checklist after having had a concussion, it helps the doctor, trainer or coach understand how he/she is feeling and hopefully shows improvement. We ask that you have your child fill out the checklist at the start of the season even before a concussion has occurred to document if some symptoms such as headaches might be a part of his/her everyday life. This is called a "baseline" to understand what symptoms are normal and common for your child. Keep a copy for your records, and turn in the original to your league/team. If a concussion occurs, the child should fill out this checklist daily. This Graded Symptom Checklist 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 playing with concussion symptoms or returns too soon after getting a concussion?

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

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

- Looks dizzy
- Looks spaced out
- Confused about plays
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily or awkwardly
- Answers questions slowly
- Slurred speech
- Shows a change in personality or way of acting
- Can't recall events before or after the injury
- Seizures or has a fit
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Passes out

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Headaches
- "Pressure in head"
- Nausea or throws up
- Neck pain
- Has trouble standing or walking
- Blurred, double or fuzzy vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or slowed down
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Drowsiness
- Change in sleep patterns
- Loss of memory
- "Don't feel right"
- Tired or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or feeling on edge
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confused
- Concentration or memory problems
- Repeating the same question/comment

What is Return to Play (RTP) determined?

Following a concussion, 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 for a few days. As the athlete returns to normal they may benefit from a reduced schedule, depending on how they feel. If recovery from the concussion is taking longer than expected, they may also benefit by a more reduced activity and may require further assessment by a medical doctor trained in the management of concussion. If the athlete is in school at time of the concussion, the California Interscholastic Federation Return to Learn guidelines should be completed 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) for more information on Return to Learn.

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 authorized person. (As a guide, California state law AB2127, effective 1/1/15, which deals with schools, states that return to play (e.g., full competition) must be no sooner than 7 days after the concussion diagnosis has been made by a physician.)

Final thoughts for Parents/Guardians:

It is well known that athletes will often not talk about signs of concussions, which is why this information sheet is so important for review with them. Teach your child to tell the coaching staff if he/she experiences such symptoms, or if he/she suspects that a teammate has had a concussion. You should also feel comfortable talking to the coaches or trainer about possible concussion signs and symptoms that you may be seeing in your child.

References:

- American Medical Society for Sports Medicine position statement: concussion in sport (2013)
- Consensus statement on concussions in sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussions in Sport held in Zurich, November 2012
- <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>



Concussion Information Sheet

League/Team: _____

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1. The law requires an 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 league/team by the athlete and the parent/guardian.

Every year all coaches are required to receive training about concussions.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>

I acknowledge that I have received and read the USA Softball of Southern California Concussion Information Sheet.

Athlete Name (Printed)

Athlete Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian (Printed)

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date