

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.
- Can change the way your brain normally works.
- Can range from mild to severe.
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport.
- 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."

How can I prevent a concussion?

It's different for every sport. But there are steps you can take to protect yourself from concussion.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets).

In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:

- Appropriate for the game, position, and activity
- Well maintained
- Properly fitted
- Used every time you play

How do I know if I've had a concussion?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up days or weeks after the injury. It's best to see a health care professional if you think you might have a concussion. An undiagnosed concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other everyday activities. It also raises your risk for additional, serious injury.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- Nausea (feeling that you might vomit)
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Headache
- Feeling sluggish
- Feeling foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)
- Confusion

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

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical check up.** A health care professional can tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to recover.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death in rare cases. Severe brain injury can change your whole life.

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

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

