



## What is a concussion?

A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. Concussions can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. You can't see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of a concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

## Signs and Symptoms of Concussions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache or pressure in head</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Blurred/double vision</li><li>• Sensitivity to light</li><li>• Difficulty concentrating</li><li>• Drowsiness</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty remembering/loss of memory</li><li>• Spots before eyes</li><li>• Confusion or Amnesia</li><li>• Ringing in the ears</li><li>• Feeling foggy or "just don't feel right"</li><li>• Balance problems</li><li>• Nervousness, Anxiety, or Irritability</li></ul> |
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## Coach or Parent May Observe

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of consciousness</li><li>• Sleepiness, grogginess</li><li>• Balance problems</li><li>• Slowness in responding</li><li>• Confusion or poor recall of events</li><li>• Seizures or convulsions</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slurred speech</li><li>• Answers questions slowly</li><li>• "Out of it" behavior</li><li>• Appears dazed</li><li>• Any change from typical behavior or personality</li><li>• Clumsy or appears uncoordinated</li></ul> |
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## Recognition and Management

If an athlete exhibits any signs, symptoms, or behaviors that make the coach suspicious that he or she may have had a concussion, that athlete must be removed from all physical activity. The coach will contact the parent/guardian of any athlete who exhibits signs consistent with a concussion. Athletes must know that they should never try to “tough out” a suspected concussion. Teammates, parents and coaches should never encourage an athlete to “play through” the symptoms of a concussion. If an athlete returns to activity before being fully healed from an initial concussion, the athlete is at greater risk for a repeat concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain has a chance to recover from the first can slow recovery or increase the chance for long-term problems. In rare cases, a repeat concussion can result in severe swelling and bleeding in the brain that can be fatal.

- No athlete should return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
- Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional that day
- Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
- After medical clearance, RTP should follow a stepwise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based upon return of any signs or symptoms.

IHSA Policy requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from a physician prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion, or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest.

## Return to Play

After suffering a concussion, no athlete should return to play or practice on that same day. In the past, athletes were allowed to return to play if their symptoms resolved within 15 minutes of the injury. Studies have shown us that the young brain does not recover quickly enough for an athlete to return to activity in such a short time. Once an athlete no longer has signs, symptoms, or behaviors of a concussion and is cleared to return to activity by an appropriate health care professional, he or she should proceed

in a stepwise fashion to allow the brain to re-adjust to exercise. In most cases, the athlete will progress one step each day. The return to activity program schedule may proceed as below, following medical clearance:

### **Progressive Physical Activity Program**

**Step 1:** Light aerobic exercise- 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike or light jog; no weight lifting, resistance training, or any other exercises.

**Step 2:** Moderate aerobic exercise- 15 to 20 minutes of running at moderate intensity in the gym or on the field without a helmet or other equipment.

**Step 3:** Non-contact training drills in full uniform. May begin weight lifting, resistance training and other exercises.

**Step 4:** Full contact practice or training.

**Step 5:** Full game play.

## Additional Resources for Parents and students

If you would like to review additional educational materials related to concussions, please check out these websites:

<http://www.ihsa.org/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussioninYouthSports>



## Acknowledgement and Consent

### **Student/Parent Acknowledgement and Consent**

By signing this form, we acknowledge we have been provided information regarding concussions, agree to participate in sports, and will abide by the decisions made by the coaching staff and medical professional.

#### **Student**

Student Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Parent or Legal Guardian**

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to student: \_\_\_\_\_

West Harvey Dixmoor School District concussion protocol has been written and implemented to promote compliance with: IHSA Return to Play Policy, IHSA Protocol for Implementation of NFHS Sports Playing Rule for Concussions, and Illinois HB 0200.

**Please return this form to the coach prior to playing sporting activities.**