



HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

A Fact Sheet for **ATHLETES**

CONCUSSION FACTS

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works.

- A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.
- A concussion can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- If you think you have a concussion, you should not return to play on the day of the injury and not until a health care professional says you are OK to return to play.

CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Concussion symptoms differ with each person and with each injury, and they may not be noticeable for hours or days. Common symptoms include:

- Headache
- Confusion
- Difficulty remembering or paying attention
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Feeling irritable, more emotional, or "down"
- Nausea or vomiting
- Bothered by light or noise
- Double or blurry vision
- Slowed reaction time
- Sleep problems
- Loss of consciousness

During recovery, exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration (such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games) may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- **DON'T HIDE IT. REPORT IT.** Ignoring your symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes symptoms worse. Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. Don't let anyone pressure you into continuing to practice or play with a concussion.
- **GET CHECKED OUT.** Only a health care professional can tell if you have a concussion and when it's OK to return to play. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out and the team can perform at its best. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.
- **TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN.** A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities. Most athletes with a concussion get better and return to sports, but it is important to rest and give your brain time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs while your brain is still healing can cause long-term problems that may change your life forever.

HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

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

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

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

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion.



HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

A Fact Sheet for PARENTS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic 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 bump or blow 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 or 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?

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

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:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just “not feeling right” or “feeling down”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION OR OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN INJURY?

- Ensure that 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 right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly and be well maintained.
- Wearing a helmet is a must to reduce the risk of a serious brain injury or skull fracture.
 - However, helmets are not designed to prevent concussions. There is no “concussion-proof” helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for kids and teens to avoid hits to the head.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

1. SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY.

A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to regular activities, including sports.

2. KEEP YOUR CHILD OUT OF PLAY.

Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play the day of the injury and 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 repeat concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.

3. TELL YOUR CHILD’S COACH ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION.

Coaches should know if your child had a previous concussion. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

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

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

NOTE: In order to participate in The Great Northwest, a **parent or legal guardian must sign this form** on the appropriate line (marked by an arrow ➡) in the middle of this page; **the player must sign this form** at the bottom of this page (also marked by an arrow ➡). The language regarding concussions is new for the 2013-2014 season and is now required by state law. **The original, signed agreement must be sent via USPS** by each coach/basketball association (not individually, by parents) **to: Great Northwest Basketball League, PO Box 506, Hudson WI 54016**

PARENT & ATHLETE AGREEMENT

Related to Concussion Law 2011 – Wisconsin Act 172

As a Parent and as an Athlete it is important to recognize the signs, symptoms, and behaviors of concussions. By signing this form you are stating that you understand the importance of recognizing and responding to the signs, symptoms, and behaviors of a concussion or head injury. *This form must be completed for every sports season and every youth athletic organization the athlete is involved with.*

Parent Agreement:

I _____ have **read** the Parent Concussion and Head Injury Information and **understand** what a concussion is and how it may be caused. I also understand the common signs, symptoms, and behaviors. I agree that my child must be removed from practice/play if a concussion is suspected.

I understand that it is my responsibility to seek medical treatment if a suspected concussion is reported to me.

I understand that my child cannot return to practice/play until providing written clearance from an appropriate health care provider to his/her coach.

I understand the possible consequences of my child returning to practice/play too soon.

Parent/Guardian

➡ **Signature** _____ **Date** _____

Athlete Agreement:

I _____ have **read** the Athlete Concussion and Head Injury Information and **understand** what a concussion is and how it may be caused.

I understand the importance of reporting a suspected concussion to my coaches and my parents/guardian.

I understand that I must be removed from practice/play if a concussion is suspected. I understand that I must provide written clearance from an appropriate health care provider to my coach before returning to practice/play.

I understand the possible consequence of returning to practice/play too soon and that my brain needs time to heal.

Athlete

➡ **Signature** _____ **Date** _____