



Concussion Information Sheet

Why am I getting this information sheet?

You are receiving this information sheet about concussions because of California state law AB 25 (effective January 1, 2012), now Education Code § 49475:

1. *The law requires a student 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 school by the athlete and the parent or guardian.*

Every 2 years all coaches are required to receive training about concussions (AB 1451), as well as certification in First Aid, CPR, and AEDs (life-saving electrical devices that can be used during CPR).

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 person.

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 concussion (see back of this 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 your team's athletic trainer and 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 or her immediately to the emergency department of your local hospital.

On the CIF website is a **Graded Concussion Symptom Checklist**. If your child fills this out after having had a concussion, it helps the doctor, athletic trainer or coach understand how he or 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 so that we can understand if some symptoms such as headache might be a part of his or her everyday life. We call this a "baseline" so that we know what symptoms are normal and common for your child. Keep a copy for your records, and turn in the original. If a concussion occurs, he or she 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:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looks dizzy• Looks spaced out• Confused about or forgets plays• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent• Moves clumsily or awkwardly• Answers questions slowly | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 |
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Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• Neck pain• Nausea or throws up• Tired or low energy• Drowsiness• Bothered by light or noise• Change in sleep patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeating the same question/comment• Has trouble standing or walking• Feeling sluggish or slowed down• Feeling foggy or groggy• Concentration or memory problems• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision• Nervousness or feeling on edge | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Pressure in head"• Loss of memory• "Don't feel right"• Sadness• Irritability• More emotional• Confused |
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What is Return to Learn?

Following a concussion, student 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 from school for a few days. As they return to school, the schedule might need to start with a few classes or a half-day depending on how they feel. If recovery from a concussion is taking longer than expected, they may also benefit from a reduced class schedule and/or limited homework; a formal school assessment may also be necessary. Your school or doctor can help suggest and make these changes. Student athletes should complete the Return to Learn guidelines 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.

How is Return to Play (RTP) determined?

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 identified school administrator. Please see cifstate.org for a graduated return to play plan. *[AB 2127, a California state law effective 1/1/15, states that return to play (i.e., full competition) must be **no sooner** than 7 days after the concussion diagnosis has been made by a physician.]*

Additional Education and Baseline Testing

Student-athletes may have the opportunity to participate in additional concussion education and baseline neurocognitive testing, which is comprised of tasks that measure brain-behavior relationships. The baseline testing does not measure intelligence, is not a diagnostic test, and is non-invasive. You will not receive a report or feedback, and the test results will be kept confidential unless requested by a qualified healthcare provider. The primary purpose of baseline testing is to help establish a measurement of the athlete's cognitive function, so that in the event the athlete sustains a head injury, the post-injury test can be compared to their individual baseline. This test is a tool which healthcare providers may use in order to have objective data to assist in clinical decisions, including appropriate treatment and return to play. Baseline testing should only be taken by healthy athletes without symptoms. If your child has had a recent injury or illness that may affect their performance, please inform the proctor prior to the test.

By signing on the signature page that you have read this concussion information sheet, you are also agreeing to allow your child to participate in additional concussion education and neurocognitive testing.

Final Thoughts for Parents and Guardians:

It is well known that high school athletes will often not talk about signs of concussions, which is why this information sheet is so important to review with them. Teach your child to tell the coaching staff if he or she experiences such symptoms, or if he or she suspects that a teammate has had a concussion. You should also feel comfortable talking to the coaches or athletic 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 concussion in sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich, November 2012
- <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/youth.html>