

Concussion Facts for athletes, parents & coaches

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- **IS SERIOUS**
- May be caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked unconscious
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

When will I notice symptoms?

Signs and symptoms of a concussion can appear immediately after the injury occurs or may not be noticeable until days or weeks after the injury.

Coaches should watch for a forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head and any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking or physical functioning.

Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

What Are the Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion?

Signs reported by the athlete include:

- Headache or pressure in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Sensitivity to light and sound
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

Signs observed by parents or guardians include:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)

How Can You Prevent a Concussion?

- Follow the coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport and practice good sportsmanship
- Make sure sports equipment fits properly (i.e., helmets, padding, shin guards and eye/mouth guards)



WELL BEYOND EXPECTATIONSM

Information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information, visit centegra.org/concussion. If you would like to schedule a baseline screening, please call the **Concussion Hotline at (815) 759-4342**.



What Should You Do If You Suspect a Concussion?

- 1. Remove the athlete from play.**
- 2. Ensure the athlete is evaluated right away by a health care professional.** A health care professional will be able to determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe to return to sports.
- 3. Keep the athlete out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Athletes should not return to play until a health care professional says it's okay. Children who return to play too soon - when the brain is still healing - risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. **Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.**

Coaches should:

Insist that safety comes first. Teach athletes safe playing techniques and encourage them to follow the rules of play and to practice good sportsmanship. Make sure athletes wear the right protective gear. Review the signs and symptoms of concussions with your team and athletic trainers.

Teach athletes and parents that it's not smart to play with a concussion. Sometimes players and parents wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let athletes persuade you that they are "just fine" after they have sustained any blow to the head.

Prevent long-term problems. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first, usually within a short period of time, can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage and even death; this more serious condition is called second impact syndrome. **Keep athletes with a known or suspected concussion from play until they have been evaluated and given permission to return to play by a health care professional.**

Centegra Impact Concussion Program

Our concussion program includes a cognitive baseline assessment and the follow-up care necessary to provide the best possible outcomes. The full assessment takes 30-40 minutes and includes the **ImPACT** test:



ImPACT

- An online testing program used to test cognitive ability with Certified Impact Consultants
- The program measures multiple aspects of cognitive function in athletes including working memory, reaction time, speed and concentration
- The combination of baseline and post injury testing helps to evaluate a student's condition and their ability for a safe return to play - recommended for ages 10-18
- Participants are contacted within 48 hours if any abnormal findings occur

Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

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