

CONCUSSION EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

Education

Concussions are common in sports. Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) believes that education of coaches, officials, athletes, and their parents or guardians are key to safely returning a student athlete to play. Appropriate immediate care after a suspected concussion, and follow up incorporating a team that includes the coach, parent or guardian, athletic trainer, and school representatives, also are important for the proper management of a sport-related concussion.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious. Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be addressed correctly.

1. Recognition and evaluation of the athlete with a concussion

- a. You cannot see a concussion. Recognition of the signs and symptoms of a concussion is important. The signs and symptoms may show up right after an injury or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury. It is important to watch for changes in how your child is acting or feeling.
- b. An athlete experiencing ANY of the signs/symptoms of a concussion should be immediately removed from play. Signs/Symptoms of a concussion include :

<u>PHYSICAL</u>	<u>COGNITIVE</u>	<u>EMOTIONAL</u>
Headache	Feeling mentally “foggy”	Irritability
Nausea/Vomiting	Feeling slowed down	Sadness
Dazed/Stunned	Difficulty concentrating	More emotional
Balance problems	Difficulty remembering	Nervousness
Visual problems	Forgetful of recent information	
Fatigue	Confused about recent events	
Sensitivity to light	Answers questions slowly	
Sensitivity to noise	Repeats questions	

2. Evaluation

- a. Following any first aid, the coach, athletic trainer, or any other medical personnel should assess the athlete to determine the presence or absence of a concussion.
- b. The athlete should be monitored for worsening or change in signs and symptoms over the next 24 hours.

3. Management of a concussion and return to play

- a. An athlete determined to have a concussion or have concussion-like symptoms will be removed from practice or competition and is not allowed to return to practice or competition that same day.

b. If an athlete displays concussion-like signs or symptoms, the athlete should be assumed to have a concussion until further medical evaluation can occur. “WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!”

c. Written clearance from a physician or Certified Athletic Trainer must be provided prior to return to play.

d. Following a concussion, the athlete should have both physical and cognitive rest until symptoms have resolved.

e. A graduated return to play protocol has been outlined on the attached sheet.

4. What should I do if my child or teen has a concussion?

a. Seek medical attention right away.

b. Help them take time to get better.

i. If your child has a concussion, his or her brain NEEDS time to heal. Your child may need to limit activities while he or she is recovering from a concussion. 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.

5. How can I help my child return to school safely after a concussion?

a. Students who return to school after a concussion may need to:

-Take rest breaks as needed

-Spend fewer hours at school

-Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments

-Reduce time spent reading, working, or on the computer

-Receive help with schoolwork