



BISHOP MCDEVITT SPORTS MEDICINE
CONCUSSION INFORMATION



The general assembly of Pennsylvania has passed Senate Bill No. 200 which establishes standards for managing concussions and traumatic brain injuries for student athletes. Students participating in or desiring to participate in athletic activity, their parents, and coaches must be educated about the nature and risk of concussion and traumatic brain injury. A student determined by a game official, coach from the student's team, certified athletic trainer, licensed physician, licensed physical therapist or other official designated by the student's school entity to exhibit signs or symptoms of a concussion or traumatic brain injury while participating in an athletic activity is required to be removed from participation at that time. The student may not return to play until the student is evaluated and cleared for participation by an appropriate medical professional with a background in concussion management.

The purpose of this document is to provide you the information required by law relating to concussions. If you have any questions, please contact Ellen Katerman, your Certified Athletic Trainer, at 610-235-6961.

What is a concussion?

A **concussion** is a brain injury caused by a bump or blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull. 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.

Comprehensive Signs/Symptoms for Concussion:

OBSERVED SIGNS

- Loss of consciousness (even briefly)
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about events
- Repeats questions
- Answers questions slowly
- Cannot recall events PRIOR to hit, bump, fall
- Cannot recall events AFTER hit, bump, fall
- Shows behavior and/or personality changes
- Forgets class schedule/assignments/things to do

COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS

- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling more slowed down
- Felling sluggish, lazy, hazy, foggy

PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Headache or "pressure" in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Does not "feel right"; feels "out of it"

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

- Irritable
- Sad
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous/Anxious



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What can happen if my child/player plays with a concussion or returns too soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete's safety.

If a concussion is suspected:

Seek medical attention right away. A concussion specialist will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports. Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a concussion specialist says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon—while 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.

It is OK to:

- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol) for head aches
- Use ice pack on head & neck as needed for comfort
- Eat a light diet
- Go to sleep
- Rest (no strenuous activity or sports)

There is NO need to:

- Check eyes with a flashlight
- Wake up every hour
- Test reflexes
- Stay in bed

Do NOT:

- Drive while symptomatic
- Exercise or lift weights
- Take ibuprofen, aspirin, naproxen or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications

If an athlete is on the field and suspected of having a concussion, he/she is removed immediately from play. The athletic trainer (ATC) will perform an on-field assessment. Once a concussion is confirmed, the ATC will give an informational packet to the parent or guardian containing educational materials and a list of local concussion specialists in the area. During the recovery process, the ATC will work with the physician to safely return the athlete to play using a graduated return-to-play program.