

**By signing, we are acknowledging that we have received and read the CDC Concussion - Parent Fact Sheet and that we have verified that our listed player/cheerleader has read the CDC Concussion Athletes Fact Sheet.**

## **PARENT FACT SHEET**

### **What Is a Concussion?**

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI— caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.

### **How Can I Help Keep My Teens Safe?**

Sports are a great way for teens to stay healthy and can help them do well in school. To help lower your teens' chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, you should:

- Help create a culture of safety for the team.
- Work with their coach to teach ways to lower the chances of getting a concussion.
- Emphasize the importance of reporting concussions and taking time to recover from one.
- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.

Tell your teens that you expect them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

When appropriate for the sport or activity, teach your teens that they must wear a helmet to lower the chances of the most serious types of brain or head injury. There is no “concussion-proof” helmet. Even with a helmet, it is important for teens to avoid hits to the head.

### **How Can I Spot a Possible Concussion?**

Teens who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or simply say they just “don't feel right” after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body—may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

#### **Signs Observed by Parents**

Appears dazed or stunned.

Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent.

Moves clumsily.

Answers questions slowly.

Loses consciousness (even briefly).

Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.

Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall.

#### Symptoms Reported by Teens

Headache or "pressure" in head.

Nausea or vomiting.

Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision.

Bothered by light or noise.

Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.

Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.

Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down."

Talk with your teens about concussion. Tell them to report their concussion symptoms to you and their coach right away. Some teens think concussions aren't serious or worry that if they report a concussion they will lose their position on the team or look weak. Remind them that *it is better to miss one game than the whole season.*

Concussions affect each teen differently. While most teens with a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks, some will have symptoms for months or longer. Talk with your teens' health care provider if their concussion symptoms do not go away or if they get worse after they return to their regular activities.

#### **What Are Some More Serious Danger Signs to Look Out For?**

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1 or take your teen to the emergency department right away if, after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, he or she has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other.
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up.
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away.
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination.
- Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching)
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation.
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously.

You can also download the CDC HEADS UP app to get concussion information at your fingertips.

#### **What Should I Do If My Teen Has a Possible Concussion?**

As a parent, if you think your teen may have a concussion, you should:

1. Remove your teen from play.
2. Keep your teen out of play the day of the injury. Your teen should be seen by a health care provider and only return to play with permission from a **health care provider who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.**
3. Ask your teen's health care provider for written instructions on helping your teen return to school. You can give the instructions to your teen's school nurse and teacher(s) and return-to-

play instructions to the coach and/or athletic trainer. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a health care provider should assess a teen for a possible concussion. You may not know how serious the concussion is at first, and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days. A teen's return to school and sports should be a gradual process that is carefully managed and monitored by a health care provider.

## **STUDENT FACT SHEET**

### **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 until a health care professional says you are OK to return to play.

Concussion symptoms differ with each person and with each injury, and 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.

### **Why should I report my symptoms?**

- Unlike with some other injuries, playing or practicing with concussion symptoms is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery and a delay in your return to play.
- While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion.
- A repeat concussion in a young athlete can result in permanent damage to your brain. They can even be fatal.

## **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.