

Educate * Prevent * Recognize * Manage * Recover

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a direct hit to the head, or an indirect trauma to the head, such as a fall or a hit to the body that whips the head/neck back and forth or side to side. For example, being hit by an opponent or piece of equipment in a sports practice, slipping on ice and landing hard on your backside, or whipping your head in a motor vehicle accident, can all be instances in which a concussion can occur. In these circumstances, the brain is rapidly shifted within the skull and will temporarily alter the cell and nerve functions of the brain. Unlike other traumatic brain injuries a concussion does not involve structural damage; therefore, it cannot be seen on an MRI or CT scan.

While there has not been any protocol or tool that can guarantee the prevention of concussions, the following guidelines can assist with reducing the incidence of concussions in sports settings.

Helmets

- Stettler Minor Football has changed their forms to get proper measurements on players to ensure that athletes wear a helmet that is appropriate. Helmets are designed and padded differently depending on the number of anticipated hits to the head and the amount of force expected with each hit.
- Stettler minor footballs helmets have a sticker on it indicating it's approved use and when it expires. This certification is given by either: National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) OR Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

Mouth Guards

- The role of mouth guards in preventing concussions is inconclusive at this time but Stettler Minor Football players must have them in when going on the field during games and have them in during contact practices. Some studies have shown the benefits while

others have shown there is no correlation.

- While the research is not clear there is certainly no harm in athletes wearing them. The use of mouth guards will reduce dental trauma and lacerations to the mouth.

Proper Body Contact Techniques

- Athletes must avoid using the head as a primary point of contact that's why Stettler Minor Football teaches chest first. Anti-spearing rules in football have helped reduce the number of cervical spine injuries in sports; however, head first contact is evident in sports other than football.

Education

- Stettler Minor football prior to the start of the season is setting goals and methods to reduce the number of concussions during the season.

- Stettler Minor Football is doing baseline testing to aid with athlete concussion recovery.

- Stettler Minor Football coaches will be teaching proper tackling and hitting techniques in order to reduce hits to the head. Training athletes to avoid leading with the head or targeting the head. Hits should be made with the chest or shoulder instead of a helmet to reduce the incidence of concussions.