

Students

Concussion Information Sheet

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches • “Pressure in head” • Nausea or vomiting • Neck pain • Balance problems or dizziness • Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish or slowed down • Feeling foggy or groggy • Drowsiness • Change in sleep patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amnesia • “Don’t feel right” • Fatigue or low energy • Sadness • Nervousness or anxiety • Irritability • More emotional • Confusion • Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays) • Repeating the same question/comment
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Signs observed by school personnel, coaches, activity sponsors, teammates/peers, and parents may include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears dazed • Vacant facial expression • Confused about assignment • Forgets plays • Is unsure of game, score, or opponent • Moves clumsily or displays incoordination • Answers questions slowly • Slurred speech • Shows behavior or personality changes • Can’t recall events prior to a physical hit • Can’t recall events after a physical hit • Seizures or convulsions • Any change in typical behavior or personality

- Loses consciousness

What can happen if my child keeps on participating with a concussion or returns too soon?

Students with signs and symptoms of a concussion during a school-related should be removed from participation immediately. Continuing to participate with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the student 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 student suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescents or teenagers will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, school staff, coaches, activity sponsors, parents and students is the key to student safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion:

Any student even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from a game, practice, or other school-related activity immediately. No student may return to a school-related activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the student should continue for several hours. In accordance with IHSA Policy, District 122 requires students to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois prior to returning to participation in a school-related activity following a concussion or after being removed from an activity due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same activity.

You should also inform your child's school building principal, nurse, coach, or activity sponsor if you think that your child may have a concussion or head injury. Remember it's better for a student to miss one game/competition/event than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the student sits out.

Adapted by the Illinois High School Association from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Document created 7/1/2011.

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