

## CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury and any brain injury is serious. It is 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. It 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 cannot see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion might show up right after the injury or could take hours or days to appear fully. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

#### **Concussion Symptoms may include one or more of the following:**

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

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appears dazed</li><li>• Vacant facial expression</li><li>• Confused about assignment</li><li>• Forgets plays or instructions</li><li>• Is unsure of game, score, opponent or location</li><li>• Moves clumsily or displays incoordination</li><li>• Answers questions slowly</li><li>• Slurred speech</li><li>• Shows behavior or personality changes</li><li>• Can’t recall events prior to hit</li><li>• Can’t recall events after hit</li><li>• Seizures or convulsions</li><li>• Any change in typical behavior or personality</li><li>• Loss of consciousness</li></ul> |
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## CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET (cont'd)

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

Sports participants 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 participant 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 to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often underreport symptoms of injuries. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is key to student-athlete safety.

### **If you think your child has suffered a concussion**

Any participant even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to 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 athlete should continue for several hours. The new "Zackery Lystedt Law" in Washington State now requires the consistent and uniform implementation of well-established "return to play" concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years:

***"a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time"***

and

***"...may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider."***

You should inform your child's coach or activity leaders if you think that your child may have a concussion. This includes injuries received in other activities. Remember: it is better to miss one game, practice or lesson than to miss the entire season. When in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions, you can visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports>