

## WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Concussion Information Sheet

#### *What is a concussion?*

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

“A concussion is a type of [traumatic brain injury](#), or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity. So, all coaches, parents, and athletes need to learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs.” 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 sports 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 student-athlete reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms Reported by Athlete	Signs Observed by Coaching Staff
Headache or “pressure” in head	Appears dazed or stunned
Nausea or vomiting	Is confused about assignment or position
Balance problems or dizziness	Forgets an instruction
Double or blurry vision	Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
Sensitivity to light	Moves clumsily
Sensitivity to noise	Answers questions slowly
Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy	Loses consciousness ( <i>even briefly</i> )
Concentration or memory problems	Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
Confusion	Can’t recall events <i>prior</i> to hit or fall
Does not “feel right” or is “feeling down”	Can’t recall events <i>after</i> hit or fall

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

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of a concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms leaves the athlete vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after the concussion occurs, particularly if an 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 young athletes often under report symptoms of injuries and concussions are no different. As a result, the education of coaches, parents, and student-athletes is the key for safety.



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#### **What happens if you think your child has suffered a concussion?**

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from play immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. Washington County Public Schools requires the consistent and uniform implementation of well established return to play guidelines:

A young athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time.

The athlete not return to play until they are evaluated by an authorized health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

Parents and coaches should inform each other of if they think the athlete may have a concussion. Remember it is better to miss one game than to miss the whole season. When in doubt, sit them out.

#### **What are the criteria for gradual return to play?**

No symptoms at rest/no medication used to manage symptoms.

No return of symptoms with typical physical and cognitive activities of daily living.

Neurocognitive functioning at typical baseline.

Normal balance and coordination.

No other medical/neurological complaints/findings.

**For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:**

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