concussion facts for athletes and parents

This is only a screening test and should not be used as a diagnostic measure.

The test establishes a baseline (or normal) record of your athlete's cognitive function, attention, memory, reaction time and visual processing speed. These results will be stored and referenced in the event of a concussion.

If you suspect your child has suffered a concussion, have him or her evaluated right away by a health care professional.

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked unconscious
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

Signs and symptoms of a concussion can appear immediately after the injury occurs or may not be noticeable until days or weeks after the injury.

What Are the Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion?

Signs reported by athlete:

- Headache or pressure in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Sensitivity to light and sound
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion

Signs observed by parents or guardians. If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)

How Can You Prevent a Concussion?

- Follow the coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Make sure sports equipment fits properly (i.e., helmets, padding, shin guards and eye/mouth guards).
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

Information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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What Should You Do If You Think Your Child Has A Concussion?

1. ***Remove the athlete from play.***
2. ***Ensure the athlete is evaluated right away by a health care professional.*** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
3. ***Keep your child out of play.*** Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon — when the brain is still healing — risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
4. ***Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion.*** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

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