



Community High School District 155

Head Injury Care and Return to Play Guidelines

Injuries to the head are very different than injuries to other parts of the body. It is known that an adolescent's susceptibility to a head injury, specifically a concussion, is greater than that of an adult. Additionally, the healing time of an adolescent's concussion can take longer.

District 155 understands the safety and welfare of our student-athletes is a primary concern. As such, all District 155 athletic coaches, volunteer and paid, will complete the National Federation of High School's *Concussion in Sports – What you Need to Know* video upon employment. Completion will be monitored by the school's athletic director.

There is currently no "concussion-proof" equipment made for any sport. As such, the following guidelines are to be followed by District personnel when a student-athlete incurs a head injury.

SIGNS/SYMPTOMS CONSISTENT WITH A CONCUSSION (INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO):

SIGNS OBSERVED BY STAFF	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appears dazed or stunned• Is confused about assignment or position• Forgets an instruction• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent• Moves clumsily• Answers questions slowly• Loses consciousness (even briefly)• Shows mood, behavior or personality changes• Can't recall events prior to hit or fall• Can't recall events after hit or fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache or "pressure" in head• Nausea or vomiting• Balance problems or dizziness• Double or blurry vision• Sensitivity to light• Sensitivity to noise• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy• Concentration or memory problems• Confusion• Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

ACTION PLAN:

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

1. Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by the athletic trainer.

3. If no athletic trainer is available, the athlete will not return to practice or play. The coach will decide if 911 should be called. The parent(s) should be called and informed of their child's condition. If 911 is called, the athletic director or assistant athletic director should be contacted immediately.
4. The athlete is not to be left alone following the injury. Monitoring of the athlete for deterioration is essential over the initial few hours following the injury.
5. Give the athlete's parents or guardians a fact sheet on concussion.
6. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, trained in the evaluation and management of concussions states the athlete is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.
7. Notify the school nurse of the athlete's concussion.
8. When in doubt, sit them out.

GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

- **Step 1:** Light aerobic exercise to increase heart rate and blood pressure in the brain.
- **Step 2:** Perform moderate to heavy cardio and/or sport specific drills.
- **Step 3:** Light contact with no head impact activities.
- **Step 4:** Full participation in practice with full contact.
- **Step 5:** If no symptoms return in step 4, AND neuro-cognitive scores have returned to normal (if used), then the athlete will be cleared to resume play with no restrictions.

RETURNING TO PLAY:

- Prior to returning to ANY physical activity (including physical education class) the athlete must report to the Athletic Trainer for further evaluation. The athlete should not participate in any physical activity until cleared by the Athletic Training Staff.
- The athlete should receive cognitive rest while symptomatic. Exposure to loud noises, bright lights, computers, video games, television and phones (including text messaging) may worsen the symptoms of a concussion.
- Neuro-cognitive testing may be used as a tool provided the student-athlete has completed a pre-test.

In the event the athlete has symptoms during any of the above steps, then the process returns to the previous step with a minimum of 48 hours of rest before resuming the sequence.

For a list of physicians familiar with concussion management programs and neuro-cognitive testing, please contact your Certified Athletic Trainer.