



## **Concussion Management**

### **Introduction**

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury-or TBI- caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells. Concussions can occur in any sport of recreation activity. All coaches, parents, and athletes need to learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs. Each year, U.S. emergency departments treat an estimated 135,000 sports and recreation related TBI's, including concussions, among children ages 5 to 18. Athletes who have ever had a concussion are at increased risk for another concussion. Children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

### **FAQ's**

#### **What is a concussion?**

A concussion is an injury to the brain. It is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to either the head or the body that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull. The resulting injury to the brain changes how the brain functions in a normal manner. The signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up immediately after the injury or may not appear for hours or days after the injury. Concussions can have serious long-term health effects, and even a seemingly mild injury can be serious. A major concern with any concussion is returning to play too soon. Having a second concussion before healing can take place from the initial or previous concussion can lead to serious and potentially fatal health conditions.

#### **What are the symptoms of a concussion?**

Signs and symptoms of a concussion are typically noticed right after the injury, but some might not be recognized until days after the injury. Common symptoms include: headache, dizziness, amnesia, fatigue, confusion, mood changes, depression, poor vision, sensitivity to light or noise, lethargy, poor attention or concentration, sleep disturbances, and aggression. The individual may or may not have lost consciousness.

### **What should be done if a concussion is suspected?**

1. Immediately remove student from practice or game
  2. Seek medical attention right away
  3. Do not allow the student to return to play until proper medical clearance and return to play guidelines have been followed.
- The permission for return to play will come from the appropriate health care professional or professionals. If you have any questions concerning concussions or the return to play policy, you may contact the athletic trainer at your school.

### **What should the athlete know about playing with a concussion?**

Teach athletes it's not smart to play with a concussion. Rest is the key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes, parents, and other school or league officials wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let your athlete convince you that they're "just fine."

### **What are the risks of returning to activity too soon after sustaining a concussion?**

Prevent long-term problems. If an athlete has a concussion, their brain needs time to heal. Don't let them return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short time period (hours, days, weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the chances for long-term problems.

### **What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion?**

Athletes 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 athlete 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 athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries. And concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete's safety.

## **Protocol and Training**

### **The coaching staff at St. Michael's Episcopal School will:**

1. Complete the "Concussion in Sports" training by the National Federation of High School's or the "Heads Up" training by the Centers for Disease Control.

2. Remove a student-athlete from a practice or competition if they show any signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, and refer them for evaluation by a licensed healthcare professional.
3. Follow all participation restrictions that are placed on a student-athlete by an appropriate, licensed health care professional that has evaluated the student-athlete.

**If a student-athlete shows any signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion:**

1. The student-athlete shall be immediately removed from game/practice.
2. The student-athlete shall be evaluated by an appropriate, licensed health care professional as soon as it is practical to do so.
3. Inform the student-athlete's parent or guardian about the possible concussion.
4. The student-athlete shall not be allowed to return to participation that day regardless of how quickly the signs or symptoms of the concussion resolve, and shall be kept from activity until a physician indicates they are symptom-free and gives clearance to return to activity as described below.

**Additional Resources**

- CDC Recommendations
  - (<http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html>)
  - (<http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/helmets/index.html>)