

## IHSAA SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION



***“Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health care professional that day. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.”***

The language above appears in all National Federation sports rule books as part of the suggested guidelines for the management of concussion. It reflects a heightened emphasis on the safety of athletes suspected of having a concussion, especially since the vast majority of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness. The State of Indiana has a law (Ind. Code 20-34-7) which mandates a protocol to be observed in the event there is an athletic head injury or concussion sustained by a high school student in a high school practice or contest. The following guidelines provide the IHSAA’s suggested procedures to be followed when there may be a head injury or may be a concussion in a practice or in a contest in an IHSAA recognized sport.

1. A high school student athlete who may have sustained a concussion or a head injury in a high school practice or a high school contest in an IHSAA recognized sport should immediately have the existence of a concussion or a head injury confirmed by the school’s medical person, who (i) is an individual who has training in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries and who is either an Indiana athletic trainer ATC/L or an Indiana medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) holding an unlimited license to practice medicine in the state of Indiana, and (ii) has been assigned to a contest to provide medical services or has been assigned to provide medical services to students at a school’s athletic practice. If it is confirmed by the school’s medical person that the student athlete has not sustained a concussion or a head injury, the student athlete may continue participation in the contest or practice.
2. A high school student athlete, suspected of having sustained a concussion or a head injury in a high school practice or contest in an IHSAA recognized sport, and who is unable to have the absence of a concussion or head injury confirmed, should:
  - a. be removed from practice and play at the time of the concussion or head injury is sustained,
  - b. be evaluated immediately by an appropriate health care professional, who (i) is an Indiana medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) who holds an unlimited license to practice medicine in the state of Indiana, and (ii) has training in the evaluation and management of concussions and head injuries,
  - c. follow a step-wise protocol which has provisions for the delay of the return to practice or play based upon the return of any signs or symptoms of concussion or head injury, and
  - d. not return to a practice or play (i) until the high school student athlete is cleared in writing to return to practice and play by the health care professional who conducted an evaluation of the student athlete, or (ii) any sooner than twenty-four (24) hours after the student athlete was removed from practice or play.
3. An official has a role in recognizing concussive signs and in making a report during a contest in an IHSAA recognized sport, and that role includes:
  - a. if, during a contest, and an official observes a player who exhibits concussive signs (including appearing dazed, stunned, confused, disoriented, to have memory loss, or the athlete is either unconscious or apparently unconscious), the official should immediately notify a coach that a player showed concussive signs and advise that the player should be seen by the school’s medical person or by an appropriate health care professional, and
  - b. if an official observes a player who exhibits concussive signs during a contest, and regardless of whether the student athlete returns to play or not, following the contest, an official’s report shall be filed with the school of the player who exhibited concussive signs, including the athletic director, by the official that initially observed the student who exhibited concussive signs; this report may be found on the IHSAA website at [www.ihsaa.org](http://www.ihsaa.org).
4. In cases where an assigned IHSAA Tournament Series physician (MD/DO) is present, his or her decision regarding any potential concussion or head injury, or to forbid an athlete to return to competition, is final, binding and may not be overruled.

# HEADS\*UP

## CONCUSSION IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

A FACT SHEET FOR **ATHLETES**

### Concussion facts:

- A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works.
- A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.
- A concussion can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- If you think you have a concussion, you should not return to play on the day of the injury and not until a health care professional says you are OK to return to play.

### What are the symptoms of a concussion?

Concussion symptoms differ with each person and with each injury, and they may not be noticeable for hours or days. Common symptoms include:

- Headache
- Confusion
- Difficulty remembering or paying attention
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Feeling irritable, more emotional, or "down"
- Nausea or vomiting
- Bothered by light or noise
- Double or blurry vision
- Slowed reaction time
- Sleep problems
- Loss of consciousness

During recovery, exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration (such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games) may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse.

### What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

**DON'T HIDE IT. REPORT IT.** Ignoring your symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes symptoms worse. Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. Don't let anyone pressure you into continuing to practice or play with a concussion.

**GET CHECKED OUT.** Only a health care professional can tell if you have a concussion and when it's OK to return to play. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out and the team can perform at its best. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

**TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN.** A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities. Most athletes with a concussion get better and return to sports, but it is important to rest and give your brain time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs while your brain is still healing can cause long-term problems that may change your life forever.

### How can I help prevent a concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

### If you think you have a concussion:

Don't hide it. Report it. Take time to recover.

**It's better to miss one game than the whole season.**

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).



# HEADS+UP

## CONCUSSION IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

A FACT SHEET FOR **PARENTS**

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

### What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs of a concussion:

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

### How can you help your child prevent a concussion or other serious brain injury?

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly and be well maintained.
- Wearing a helmet is a must to reduce the risk of a serious brain injury or skull fracture.
  - However, helmets are not designed to prevent concussions. There is no “concussion-proof” helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for kids and teens to avoid hits to the head.

### What should you do if you think your child has a concussion?

**SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY.** 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 regular activities, including sports.

**KEEP YOUR CHILD OUT OF PLAY.** Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a repeat concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.

**TELL YOUR CHILD’S COACH ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION.** Coaches should know if your child had a previous concussion. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

#### If you think your teen has a concussion:

Don’t assess it yourself. Take him/her out of play. Seek the advice of a health care professional.

**It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.**

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).

