

A Fact Sheet for **COACHES**

To download the coaches fact sheet in Spanish, please visit www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports
Para descargar la hoja informativa para los entrenadores en español, por favor visite:
www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports

THE FACTS

- A concussion is a **brain injury**.
- All concussions are **serious**.
- Concussions can occur **without** loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur **in any sport**.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they **first occur** can help prevent further injury or even death.

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost.

The potential for concussions is greatest in athletic environments where collisions are common.¹ Concussions can occur, however, in **any** organized or unorganized sport or

recreational activity. As many as 3.8 million sports- and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year.²

RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
- and-
2. Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. (See the signs and symptoms of concussion listed on the next page.)

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

ACTION PLAN

WHAT SHOULD A COACH DO WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

- 1. Remove the athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.
- 2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
 - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head
 - Any loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out) and if so, for how long
 - Any memory loss immediately following the injury
 - Any seizures immediately following the injury
 - Number of previous concussions (if any)

- 3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion.**

Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

- 4. Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. Prevent common long-term problems and the rare *second impact syndrome* by delaying the athlete's return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.

REFERENCES

1. Powell JW. Cerebral concussion: causes, effects, and risks in sports. *Journal of Athletic Training* 2001; 36(3):307-311.
2. Langlois JA, Rutland-Brown W, Wald M. The epidemiology and impact of traumatic brain injury: a brief overview. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation* 2006; 21(5):375-378.
3. Lovell MR, Collins MW, Iverson GL, Johnston KM, Bradley JP. Grade 1 or "ding" concussions in high school athletes. *The American Journal of Sports Medicine* 2004; 32(1):47-54.
4. Institute of Medicine (US). Is soccer bad for children's heads? Summary of the IOM Workshop on Neuropsychological Consequences of Head Impact in Youth Soccer. Washington (DC): National Academy Press; 2002.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Sports-related recurrent brain injuries-United States. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 1997; 46(10):224-227. Available at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046702.htm.

*If you think your athlete has sustained a concussion...
take him/her out of play, and seek the advice of a health care professional
experienced in evaluating for concussion.*



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- 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
- Does not "feel right"

Adapted from Lovell et al. 2004

PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

Athletes who experience any of these signs or symptoms after a bump or blow to the head should be kept from play until given permission to return to play by a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can last from several minutes to days, weeks, months, or even longer in some cases.

Remember, you can't see a concussion and some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. If you have any suspicion that your athlete has a concussion, you should keep the athlete out of the game or practice.

As a coach, you can play a key role in preventing concussions and responding to them properly when they occur. Here are some steps you can take to ensure the best outcome for your athletes and the team:

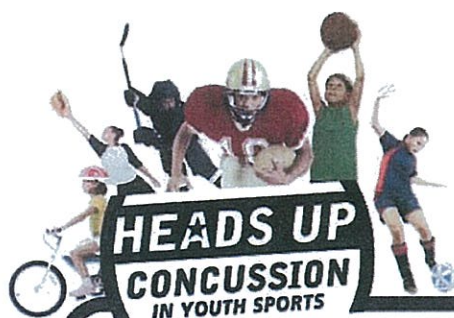
- **Educate athletes and parents about concussion.** Talk with athletes and their parents about the dangers and potential long-term consequences of concussion. For more information on long-term effects of concussion, view the following online video clip: http://www.cdc.gov/ncepc/tb/clip: http://www.cdc.gov/ncepc/tb/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm#Video.

Explain your concerns about concussion and your expectations of safe play to athletes, parents, and assistant coaches. Pass out the concussion fact sheets for athletes and for parents at the beginning of the season and again if a concussion occurs.

from play until evaluated and given permission to return by a health care professional. Parents and athletes should sign the concussion policy statement at the beginning of the sports season.

- **Teach athletes and parents that it's not smart to play with a concussion.** Sometimes players and parents wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let athletes persuade you that they're "just fine" after they have sustained any bump or blow to the head. Ask if players have ever had a concussion.
- **Insist that safety comes first.**
 - Teach athletes safe playing techniques and encourage them to follow the rules of play.
 - Encourage athletes to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
 - Make sure athletes wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
 - Review the athlete fact sheet with your team to help them recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion.
- **Prevent long-term problems.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and even death. This more serious condition is called *second impact syndrome*.⁴⁵ Keep athletes with known or suspected concussion from play until they have been evaluated and given permission to return to play by a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion. Remind your athletes: "It's better to miss one game than the whole season."

Check with your youth sports league or administrator about concussion policies. Concussion policy statements can be developed to include the league's commitment to safety, a brief description of concussion, and information on when athletes can safely return to play following a concussion (i.e., an athlete with known or suspected concussion should be kept



A Fact Sheet for PARENTS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a 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?

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
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- 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
- Does not "feel right"

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- 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 (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

- 1. 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 sports.
- 2. 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—while 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.
- 3. 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.

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

SUMMARY OF MARYLAND HB 858 AND SB 771

Education – Public Schools and Youth Sports Programs – Concussions

- This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to develop policies and implement a program to provide concussion awareness to coaches, school personnel, students, and parents in collaboration with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMD), local boards of education, and other experts and stakeholders. A student or youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury in a practice or game must be removed from play. Once removed from play, a student or youth athlete may not return to play until he or she has obtained written clearance from a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.
- The concussion awareness program developed by MSDE must promote awareness on the nature and risk of a concussion or head injury, criteria for removal from and return to play, risks of not reporting injury and continuing to play, and appropriate academic accommodations for students diagnosed with concussions or head injuries. The program must include a process to verify that a coach has received information relating to the program.
- Before a student enrolled in a public school system in Maryland may participate in an authorized interscholastic athletic activity, a local board must provide a concussion and head injury information sheet to the student and the student's parent or guardian; both must acknowledge the receipt of this sheet by signing a statement. MSDE must create the information sheet and the acknowledgement statement.
- Before an individual participates in an authorized athletic activity on school property, a local board must provide, or require a third party to provide, information on concussions and head injuries to the individual and, if applicable, a parent or guardian. The individual and, if applicable, the parent or guardian, must acknowledge receipt of the information and return the acknowledgement of the local board or third party.
- A youth sports program that uses a public school facility must annually provide to the local board (or the board's agent) a statement of intent to comply with the bill's requirements for the management of a concussion or other head injury of a participant. A youth sports program must also make the information on concussions and head injuries developed by MSDE available to coaches, youth athletes, and parent and guardians. A coach must review the information.
- Before a youth sports program may use a facility owned or operated by a local government, the local government must provide notice to the youth sports program of the requirements of the bill.
- The term "youth sports program" is defined as a program organized for recreational athletic competition or instruction for participants who are under the age of 19 years.
- The bill takes effect July 1, 2011.
- For more information regarding concussions, please call 1-800-232-4636 or www.cdc.gov/concussioninyouthsports.

Program Name: _____

Age Group: _____

In compliance with Maryland HB 858 and SB 771, I hereby acknowledge that I have received the information regarding concussions published by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For additional information I understand that I may call 1-800-232-4636 or go to www.dcd.gov/concussioninyouthsports.

Print/Signature

Check appropriate box

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Recreation Council Letterhead

Date

Arden McClune, Director
Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation
702 N. Tollgate Road
Bel Air, MD 21014-2437

Subject: Intent to Comply with HB858/SB771 Youth Sports Program Concussions

Dear Mrs. McClune:

This is our Statement of Intent to comply with the House Bill 858/Senate Bill 771 requirements for the management of a concussion or other head injury of a program participant. We have reviewed the summary of the legislation and understand the standards. We will provide the information on concussions and head injuries to our coaches, youth athletes, parents and guardians and ensure that they acknowledge receipt. We plan to utilize the information developed by the Centers for Disease Control "Heads Up – Concussion in Youth Sports" Program. (If using an alternative information package, please attach a copy to this statement). Our coaches will review the information, and the chairperson of each program will follow up with coaches to insure requirements are followed.

Please accept this letter as our intent to comply with the requirements associated with HB858/SB771 for all youth sports programs of the _____ Recreation Council.

You may contact me if there are any questions or concerns we need to discuss.

I can be reached at 410-638-3570 or acmcclune@harfordcountymd.gov

Sincerely,

Recreation Council President