

School of the Holy Child

SCHOLASTIC ATHLETE FACT SHEET ON CONCUSSION

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION? A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a blow to the head or body -
 - From contact with another player
 - Hitting a hard surface such as the ground, ice, or floor
 - Being hit by a piece of equipment such as a bat, lacrosse stick or field hockey ball
 - Can change the way your brain normally works
 - Presents differently for each athlete
 - Can occur during practice or competition in ANY sport
 - Can happen even if you do not lose consciousness
-

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury

Concussion Symptoms Include:

- Headache
- Confusion
- Memory Loss
- Balance problems
- Pressure in the Head
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Feeling "in a fog" or "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Dizziness
- Slowed reaction time

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

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

Don't hide it. Tell your athletic trainer, coach, and parents. Never ignore a blow to the head. Also, tell your athletic trainer and coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out.

Report it. Do not return to participation in a game, practice, or other activity with symptoms. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to return to play.

Get Checked Out. Your physician, athletic trainer, or health care professional can tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are cleared to return to play. A concussion can affect your ability to perform everyday activities, your reaction time, balance, sleep, and classroom performance.

Take time to recover. If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a repeat concussion. In rare cases, repeat concussions can cause permanent brain damage, and even death. Severe brain injury can change your whole life. **Once cleared to resume activity by the physician, you will follow a Return To Play Protocol.**

HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Basic steps you can take to protect yourself from a concussion:

- Do not initiate contact with your head or helmet. You can still get a concussion if you are wearing a helmet.
- Avoid striking an opponent in the head. Undercutting, flying elbows, stepping on a head, checking an unprotected opponent, and sticks to the head can all cause concussions.
- Follow your athletics department's rules for safety and the rules of sport
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times
- Practice and perfect the skills of the sport