

Post Concussion Home Instructions

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 or floor, or 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, but does not show up on standard medical imaging (e.g. CAT scan).
- Presents itself differently for each athlete, with signs and symptoms that may take minutes or hours to develop
- Can occur during practice or competition in ANY sport
- Can happen even if you do not lose consciousness
- Typically causes temporary symptoms that get better with rest

After a Possible Concussion

Any student suspected of having a concussion, either based on the disclosure of a head injury, observed or reported symptoms, or by sustaining a significant blow to the head or body, must be immediately removed from athletic activity and assessed by the Athletic Trainer. An athlete that is suspected of having a concussion will not be permitted to return to activity that day. The parents of the athlete will be contacted, as well as the school nurse.

Although most concussions do not cause long-term or permanent damage, there is always a chance of a more serious injury. Athletes should be monitored for 24-48 hours following a concussion for worsening symptoms.

Please seek immediate medical attention if your daughter exhibits any of the following:

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| ● Develops a worse headache | ● Pupils unequal size |
| ● Becomes dizzy, drowsy, or cannot be aroused | ● Ringing in the ears |
| ● Mental confusion | ● Seizures |
| ● Slurred speech | ● Clear fluid coming from ears and/or nose |
| ● Repeated vomiting | ● Change in consciousness |
| | ● Anything you find unusual |

The following symptoms are common following a concussion:

- Headache
- Pressure in the Head
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Feeling "in a fog"
- Feeling "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Dizziness

Sleep after a concussion

It is safe to go to sleep following a concussion; your child may be tired after the injury, and sleep may help with the recovery. However, there is a difference in your child going to sleep at night and your child not being able to stay awake. Continuing to monitor your child's symptoms is the best way to determine if further evaluation is necessary. If any doubts or questions arise, please contact your physician.

Medications

Contact your physician before taking any medications.

Physician Appointments

A student that is suspected of having a concussion must see a Physician. The Athletic Trainer and Nurse must receive a note with the diagnosis and any accommodations that the student may need. Your daughter will need physician clearance in order to begin the return to play protocol and safely return to sports following a concussion.

Recovery from a Concussion:

The majority of concussions (80-90%) resolve in 7-10 days, although the recovery time may be longer for children and adolescents. Both cognitive and physical rest are imperative following a concussion.

Cognitive Rest:

Rest is necessary following a concussion to allow the brain to recover. Students may have difficulty with concentration, memory, and the speed with which they process information, which can negatively impact learning. Demanding that the brain complete additional "learning tasks" during recovery can prolong symptoms and delay recovery. School accommodations may be necessary while a student is recovering; these are determined on a case-by-case basis and the concussion management team will work with teachers and administrators to communicate necessary accommodations.

Cognitive rest guidelines following a concussion are as follows:

Some students may initially need to rest at home until headaches or other significant symptoms resolve. Avoid homework, tests, papers and projects, reading, TV, computer use, video games, text messaging, noise (concerts, sporting events, parties, etc.), and socializing (going to the movies, etc). However, keeping the concussed athletes in a quiet, dark room, is **NOT** recommended, as isolation can affect emotional well-being.

Once symptoms begin to resolve, students may begin brief periods of studying or reading. Return to school is advised for gradually increasing periods of time. Allowing students to sleep later in the morning and arrive at school late is one example of a possible modified schedule that could aid in recovery.

Physical Rest

It is important to avoid activities that could cause a second blow to the head. A repeat concussion before the first has healed can increase the severity and duration of symptoms, and can lead to more serious complications, and even death.

There are several steps that must be completed before an athlete can return to Holy Child athletics:

1. Complete a daily Symptom Checklist with the athletic trainer to monitor symptoms. The symptom checklist is a list of 23 symptoms which the athlete will rate on scale from 0 (not experiencing symptom) to 6 (very high severity of symptom). When the athlete reports that she is symptom-free for 24 hours, she may proceed to the next step.
2. The athlete will take the ImpACT test when she is symptom-free. The test results must be on par with baseline test. In the instance that the test results are not on par with her baseline, she must wait 24 hours before taking the test again. Test results will be sent to the School Neuropsychologist for review and approval.
3. Obtain and turn in a Physician clearance note allowing the athlete to return to activity.
4. Complete the 6-step return to play protocol under the supervision of the athletic trainer. Each step has a 24-hour time frame.

- a. Step 1 – Low impact, non-strenuous activity, such as walking or riding a stationary bike.
- b. Step 2 – Higher impact, higher exertion, and moderate aerobic activity, such as running.
- c. Step 3 – Sport specific non-contact activity. Low resistance weight training with a spotter can be completed.
- d. Step 4 – Sport specific activity, non-contact drills.
- e. Step 5 – Full contact training drills and intense aerobic activity.
- f. Step 6 – Return to full activities without restrictions.

If symptoms return on any given day of the RTP progression, the session will end and continue on the following day provided the symptoms subside quickly and no other symptoms occur. Please note that students should not be taking medications to reduce symptoms (e.g. tylenol, acetaminophen, advil, ibuprofen) for clearance following a concussion or during the steps of Return to Play. The Head Athletic Trainer makes the final decision regarding when an athlete returns to sports at Holy Child.

About ImPACT Testing

At Holy Child, we use the ImPACT Concussion Management system, a computer-based testing program that takes about 40 minutes and measures attention, verbal and visual memory, processing speed and reaction time. A baseline test is taken to capture individualized scores for each student. In the event that an athlete receives a concussion, the athlete may be asked to take the ImPACT test within 48 hours after injury. Once the athlete is symptom-free, a follow-up test will be administered. Test results will be compared to the baseline as well as national normative data. The school neuropsychologist will be consulted to review ImPACT test results.

The ImPACT test is just one tool we use to assess an athlete's readiness to return to play. Please know that the ImPACT test does not diagnose concussions. Holy Child will use this program in conjunction with the athlete's history, symptom checklist, physical exam, and physician guidance in returning athletes to play.

Persistent Symptoms

Some students (10-15%) will experience prolonged concussion symptoms. Cases of concussion in sports where clinical recovery falls outside the expected 7-10 day recovery should be managed in a multidisciplinary manner by healthcare providers with experience in sports-related concussions. Your daughter may need to see a neurologist with concussion experience, instead of her primary care physician.

The Holy Child community strives to provide a supportive environment for your daughter and will work as a team to allow her to safely return to school and activity following a concussion. If you have any questions, please contact:

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