

# NEW YORK STATE SCHOLASTIC ATHLETE

## FACT SHEET ON CONCUSSIONS

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### 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, 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.
- Can range from mild to severe.
- Presents itself 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:

- Amnesia.
- Confusion.
- Headache.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Balance problems or dizziness.
- Double or fuzzy vision.
- Sensitivity to light or noise.
- Nausea (feeling that you might vomit).
- Feeling sluggish, foggy or groggy.
- Feeling unusually irritable.
- Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays, facts, meeting times).
- 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 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 all cause concussions.
- Follow your athletics department's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Practice and perfect the skills of the sport.

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## Parental/Guardian Acknowledgement Regarding Concussion Information

**Read this form carefully before signing**

I, the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_  
acknowledge the receipt and understanding of the **“New York State  
Scholastic Athlete Fact Sheet on Concussions”**, have reviewed it  
with my child, and asked any questions regarding its contents to the  
school district.

**Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)

**If scholastic athlete is 18 years of age or older**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature