

MICHIGAN CITY HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK



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OVERVIEW & CAMPUS EXPECTATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to give parents and students a guide to specific rules, regulations, and policies that help to guide MCHS Athletics. It must be understood by all students and their parents/legal guardians that a condition to participate in our athletic programs is a commitment to follow these guidelines. It must also be understood that students who violate these rules and regulations shall face appropriate disciplinary action. As a member of an athletic team, you are a representative of the school. Appropriate behavior is expected both on and off the playing field. We ask that you review this handbook carefully and keep it throughout your participation as an athlete.

The staff and administration welcome you to the athletic program and are available to assist you in any way necessary. Good luck, and enjoy your participation in MCHS Athletics.

Philosophy & Objectives of Participation

MCHS considers athletics to be an integral part of the educational program. By promoting sportsmanship at all levels, the athletic program instills pride, reinforces a sound value structure, and enhances the individual's self-image. We strive to provide experiences that will help students develop physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. MCHS athletic programs should achieve and maintain the following goals:

- Develop a sound athletic program based upon skill development in a comprehensive interscholastic athletic sports program.
- Concentrate on the development of skills and fundamentals of student-athletes
- Develop athletes who demonstrate good sportsmanship
- Promote good sportsmanship among all spectators
- Encourage individual commitment to personal and team goals
- Emphasize the importance of academic achievement
- Promote school pride and pride in MCHS Athletics

Student-Athlete Responsibilities

An athlete at Michigan City High School will:

- Show respect for opponents at all times
- Show respect for officials and their decisions
- Maintain passing grades in all classes
- Communicate with the coach and the team in a positive manner
- Avoid use or possession of alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances
- Adhere to all school rules
- Be in attendance at all practices and games
- Be on time and prepared for all practices and games
- Demonstrate a willingness to work hard and be attentive at practices
- Take responsibility for school issued equipment and uniforms. Lost or stolen uniforms and equipment must be paid for at the replacement cost.

Athletics Code of Conduct and Eligibility Michigan City High School

A participant's conduct, in and out of school, shall be such as:

- Not to reflect discredit upon the school or the activity.
- Not to create a disruptive influence on the discipline, good order, moral or educational environment in the school.
- Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege that may be revoked for any just cause.*
- If an athlete quits a team (after making the team), the athlete may not participate in open gym or participate with another team during that same season if the athlete has not received a release from the coach of the sport he/she quit.

***NOTE: It is recognized that principals, by the administrative authority vested in them by their School Corporation, may exclude such participants from representing their school.**

1. Statement of Purpose and Philosophy

A. Purpose

1. To encourage students involved in athletic activities to develop a wholesome and healthful lifestyle.
2. To foster self-discipline.
3. To communicate rules/regulations in a clear, concise manner.
4. To publish and distribute the rules and regulations so they are readily available to students, parents, and staff.
5. To provide coaches with unifying guidelines so that enforcement of the rules is fair and equitable throughout the school community.

B. Philosophy

Interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the school's program, offering students a means to help develop self-discipline, accept responsibility, and make decisions to prepare for the adult world. Athletes are encouraged to develop social conscience as well as intellectual faculties. We believe that learning is a never-ending process and that athletic participation helps to develop a positive set of values to guide young people through life. Athletics are wholesome activities because participants are judged by their ability to perform singly or in concert as they strive toward athletic excellence.

2. Responsibilities

It is a privilege to participate in and be associated with athletics. This privilege is extended to all students, provided they are willing to assume certain responsibilities. A student must be willing to make necessary sacrifices in order to be a credit to himself/herself. This can be done by:

- A. Achieving academically by first being a good student.
- B. Exhibiting high standards of social behavior.
- C. Displaying sportsmanship, both on and off the playing field.
- D. Respecting other athletes, cheerleaders, officials, spectators, and those in authority.
- E. Being cooperative.
- F. Maintaining a good appearance, including cleanliness and good grooming.
- G. Using language that reflects well on family, school, and self.
- H. Being a positive leader by example, words, and/or actions.
- I. Complying with the rules necessary to be a good standing at the completion of the sport season (the last contest or the banquet, whichever comes later).

3. Eligibility*

As outlined by the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) and the Michigan City Area Schools, the student must:

- A. Have a completed school-approved physical examination form on file and have consent and release form on file before practicing.
- B. Have a completed Athletic Permit Form on file with the school.
- C. Have a completed Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Form on file with the school.
- D. Be in good standing with the school.
- E. Have earned passing grades in five (5) or more full credit subjects during the previous grading period or semester (as determined by IHSAA rules) and be currently enrolled in and passing five (5) or more full credit subjects.
- F. Have a minimum grade point average of 1.5 on a 4.0 scale for the previous grading period or semester (as determined by IHSAA rules).

*These guidelines also apply to cheerleaders.

Credit Recovery

Credit recovery courses DO count towards athletic eligibility. These courses must be taken during regular school hours as part of a student's regular daily schedule. A limit of ONE credit may be earned for each class period a student is in credit recovery for a semester. (A student cannot earn multiple credits in only one period of credit recovery per day) A limit of TWO credits may be earned per semester to count towards athletic eligibility.

4. The following general rules for participants have been established:

- A. A participant shall not violate local and state laws, IHSAA regulations, and the Michigan City High School's "Code of Responsible Behavior" and "Guidelines for Athletics."
- B. Abuse of school-owned equipment is prohibited.
- C. A participant must attend a full day of school the day in which he/she participated in competition, performance, or practice unless excused by a principal or Athletic Director.
- D. A participant shall not possess or use tobacco products.
- E. A participant shall not consume or be in possession of alcoholic beverages.
- F. A participant shall not knowingly possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, stimulant, controlled substance, or possess, use, or transmit paraphernalia for use of such substances.

- G. A participant is discouraged from being in attendance at a place where he/she knows that illegal consumption or possession of alcohol is occurring, and/or transmission or use of substances listed in Section D-6 of the IHSA By-Laws. Attendance at these events may result in ineligibility.
- H. A participant shall not use or possess weapons.

5. Procedure for Alleged Violations

Any alleged violation of the above general rules shall be reported first to the Athletic Director or school administration. The allegation will then be followed by an investigation by the Athletic Director (or his designee) and/or the school administration. The coach will be given the findings and will recommend the appropriate discipline to the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will review the coach's decision and share its decision of the violation penalty with the building Principal. If the student is found to be in violation, the following discipline will result:

- A. Consequences of violations:
 - 1. One the first offense in violation of Section 4, D-H, (tobacco, alcohol, firearms and drugs) the student will be excluded from contest participation for a minimum of $\frac{1}{4}$ of the contests (include actual number of contests scheduled plus one IHSA tournament contest and round to the nearest whole number) for the present or next sport in which the athlete has previously participated for a complete season at the high school level.
 - 2. When a violation occurs and an athlete has qualified for awards, the awards may be given, subject to the approval of the Athletic Committee.
 - 3. During an exclusionary period, practice for the athlete is mandatory.
 - 4. When it is determined that student has been truthful about the violation from the beginning of the investigation, the penalty for the exclusion from participation will be reduced by 25 percent.
 - 5. After a review of relevant factors, the coach will submit a letter outlining recommended disciplinary action to the Athletic Director.
- B. Individual coaches will establish, within the confines of their own sport programs, additional rules and regulations which pertain to such items as practice attendance, tardiness, practice and game conduct, curfews, etc. These rules and regulations, in conjunction with their ensuing penalties for violation, shall be in writing and given to each athlete participating in that program, with an additional copy on file in the office of the Athletic Director.
- C. When there have been two offenses in violation of Section 4, D-H the athlete will be excluded from all athletic participation for one full year (12 Months).
- D. Athletes have a responsibility to Michigan City High School that extends beyond the season in which they participate. Therefore, athletes who violate training rules and/or general rules while out of season will be disciplined in the same manner as an in-season athlete.
- E. These consequences may be in addition to the normal disciplinary consequences. The Athletic Department works hand-in-hand with the Discipline Office at MCHS. The question of "double jeopardy" will be taken into consideration in disciplinary cases, and students should be aware that they may or may not be penalized both as students in general and as student-athletes.

6. Appeal Procedure

Any excluded participant may appeal a decision of exclusion to the building Principal.

By signing the Student-Athlete Handbook you signify your agreement with this Code of Conduct.

Inherent Risk

There is risk of injury in nearly every athletic endeavor. The coaching staff will work to reduce the risk of injury by maintaining professional standards. However, as a condition of participation, the student-athlete and his/her parents must sign a waiver form. Participation in athletics may result in injury, paralysis, or even death, and choosing to participate acknowledges these risks. The medical release portion of the waiver must be completed, and a current physical must be on file at the school. Appropriate measures will be taken in the event of an incident, and you will be called if necessary.

Transportation

Student-athletes will be transported to and from athletic contests by either a school van or a chartered bus. It is required that student-athletes travel to and from away contests with the team. Student-athletes, on occasion, may be released to parents/guardians who are specifically authorized by the school as noted on our allowed to pick up form, and who also sign a specific waiver provided by the head coach at the time the student is released. Teams will be leaving for away contests in time to arrive and properly prepare for the contest.

A coach should never transport a student-athlete in his/her personal vehicle.

Student-athletes who return to school with the team will be instructed to call home and inform their parent/guardian that we are returning to school. Students may walk home, leave with friends, or take public transportation home after the team arrives at school. If a parent/guardian will be picking up the student-athlete at the school, please arrive within 15 minutes of the teams' return to school. Student-athletes will not be permitted to travel with the team if waits of longer than 15 minutes occur twice.

Insurance

Student-athletes should carry their own primary insurance policy in order to be properly insured for participation in interscholastic athletics. The school does not carry a secondary insurance policy. Direct any inquiries to the Athletic Office.

SPORTSMANSHIP/CONDUCT

IHSAA Rule 8-1 Student Conduct

Contestant's conduct, in and out of school, shall be such as (1) not to reflect discredit upon their school or the Association, or (2) not to create a disruptive influence on the discipline, good order, moral or educational environment in the school.

IHSAA Rule 8-4 Contest Ejection

- A.** Any Contestant, coach, contest administrator or school administrator who is ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike act the first time during a sport season shall be suspended for the next contest at that level of competition and all other contests at any level in the interim, unless an IHSAA sport-specific rule or policy provides a different protocol or penalty for a first ejection.

- C.** Any contestant, coach, contest administrator or school administrator who is ejected from a contest for an unsportsmanlike act a second time during a sport season shall be suspended for the next two (2) contests at that level of competition and all other contests at any level in the interim, unless an IHSAA sport-specific rule or policy provides a different protocol or penalty for a second ejection.

Expectations of the Participant

As a member of an athletic team, you represent the school both on and off the athletic field.

- Appropriate behavior is expected while traveling to the game, watching the game, and participating.
- Treat opponents and opposing fans with respect. Taunting and derogatory remarks are not acceptable. If you experience any difficulty with someone from the opposing school, find a coach or school personnel.
- Treat officials with respect and dignity. Sometimes officials make mistakes, but it is unacceptable to argue about calls.
- On time and prepared for all practices and games. You have made a commitment to your team. Tell your coach in advance if there is a conflict.

Maintain good grades. You can't contribute as much if you can't play.

Expectations of Spectators

Positive fan support is an asset for the players, coaches, and other spectators.

- Show respect for opposing players, coaches, other spectators, and officials. Respect their roles even if you disagree with their judgment.
- Negative comments, or the berating of players, coaches, and officials are not in keeping with our philosophy.

Remember that school athletics are learning experiences for students, and the programs are part of the educational process. Adolescents learn proper behavior from watching adults.

Expectations of Parents/Guardians

Be positive and encourage your son/daughter.

- If your child has questions regarding playing time and performance, encourage him/her to discuss these issues with the coach.
- Show respect for opposing players, coaches, spectators, and officials. Respect their roles even if you disagree with their judgment.
- Understand that your child has made a commitment to the team and attendance at games and practices is essential for the success of the team.

Procedure to Follow to Address Concerns

1. The student-athlete should discuss the concern with the coach or captain.
2. The student-athlete may discuss the concern with the Athletic Director.
3. If the problem is not resolved, the parent should set up an appointment to meet with the coach.
4. If the problem is still not resolved, the parent should call and set up an appointment to meet with the Athletic Director.

IMPORTANT IHSAA REGULATIONS

Participation Limitation

The IHSAA limits high school eligibility to eight consecutive semesters. This refers to semesters in school and not semesters of athletic participation. A student may participate in a sport for a maximum of Four (4) full seasons.

Age

According to the IHSAA a student-athlete who is or shall be twenty (20) years of age prior to or on the scheduled date of the IHSAA State Finals in a sport shall be ineligible for interschool athletic competition in that sport.

Club and Park Sports

The IHSAA rules state that a student cannot compete or practice with a non-school team during the season that sport is being played at the high school level. Also, the student-athlete may not participate in any event or competition that uses the skill of the sport during the season.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENT-ATHLETES

Prospective student-athletes should be aware of school announcements regarding upcoming tryouts and the start of each sport season. Information on sports, coaches, and the beginning of each season is always available in the Athletic Office. Prospective student-athletes will need to take three important steps to be ready to start a season and join a team:

1. Turn in a completed physical examination signed by a doctor or medical professional showing you are medically cleared to participate in interscholastic sports. Physicals are good for 12 months, so you will need to get one every year you participate. The IHSAA physical form is online and also attached to the back of this handbook.
2. Turn in a completed Michigan City High School Athletic Permit Form. This form provides us all of the information we need and contains all of the releases and procedures which you and your parent/guardian must sign off on.
3. Turn in a completed Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest form.

These three forms must be turned in to the Athletic Office before you participate in any organized tryout, practice, or competition. Along with these documents, the Athletic Office will also check your academic eligibility. Those guidelines are described in another part of handbook.

MCHS ATHLETIC AWARDS POLICY

It is the responsibility of the head coach to establish criteria for lettering. Athletic trophies that are specific to the sport, and that are presented at the award programs need to be turned in to the Athletic Office promptly so that the nameplates can be made. These awards are intended to be very special. It is the desire of the Athletic Department for coaches avoid having “co” winners. These decisions are admittedly difficult, yet essential to keeping the integrity of the award. The winners of these trophies (MVP, Wolf Award, etc.) should not be made public until they are presented with the award.

All head coaches will tell their squads the requirements for lettering, selection of Most Valuable Player, and earning a certificate at the start of the season. This should then be posted in the locker room. These requirements will be up-dated each year with all coaches.

Michigan City High School will pay for the following awards:

- Certificates-Awarded to an athlete who completes their first sport
- Numerals-Awarded to an athlete who has completed the sports’ criteria for lettering
- Letter MC-Awarded to an athlete who has completed the sports’ criteria for second year of the same sport or has completed the criteria for two or more sports.
- Chevron-Will be awarded with the “MC” letter
- Most Valuable Trophy

- Wolf Award
- Honor Award Blanket/Plaque

Student athletes must pay for their own sweaters or jackets. They may purchase a jacket only after showing their certificate of a varsity letter “MC”.

All team members who finish the season in good standing will be invited to attend the sports awards program.

To receive an Honor Awards Blanket, Jacket, an athlete must accumulate 21 points with points being given as follows:

- Participation-1 point per year
- Letter-3 points per year
- Manager (1st Year)-1 point per year
- Manager (After 1st year)-3 points per year

CONCUSSIONS

Concussions are a very serious medical condition, and are to be treated as such. Student-athletes should be aware that there are very specific protocols for head injuries, and a significant loss of playing time can occur when there is an injury to the head. A student-athlete sustaining a head injury will not be allowed to return to practice or competition until there is a complete absence of concussion-related symptoms for at least 24 hours. Please be sure to read and sign off on the concussion information included in this manual.

TRANSFERS

If you are a transfer student to MCHS, you must see the Athletic Director. Transfer students may not be automatically eligible to participate. A meeting with the Athletic Director will be held to determine eligibility.

The Student Athlete's Bill of Rights

ALL STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT.....

1. to take part in the activities of their choice, free from the pressure of those who would have them choose another.
2. to be coached by persons who are professional in their conduct.
3. to be provided the equipment and protection necessary to enable them to participate safely.
4. to expect their chosen activities to be treated with the same dignity and respect as other school activities.
5. to be coached by persons who have more interest in the students, their well-being, and their development than they do in winning or personal goals.
6. to engage in competition at a level they can enjoy.
7. to have an atmosphere free from alcohol, drugs, and foul language.
8. to be free of pressures from coaches to participate or practice illegally.
9. to be free of pressure to participate in camps, clinics, or outside teams in order to be a part of the school team.
10. to team membership, school pride, fair participation and crowd sportsmanship.

Impact of Coaches

I have come to a frightening conclusion.

I am the decisive element in the classroom, gym, or on the field.

It is my personal approach that creates the climate.

It is my daily mood that makes the weather.

As a coach, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous.

I can be the tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.

I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.

In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.

An adaptation of Haim Ginott

Coaches Code Of Ethics

National Federation Coaches Association

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect, and his or her welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the NFHS Board of Directors.

- **The coach** shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- **The coach** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- **The coach** shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.
- **The coach** shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.
- **The coach** shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.
- **The coach** shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- **The coach** shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs, and administrators.
- **The coach** shall respect and support contest officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
- **The coach** should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.
- **The coach** shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give student special consideration.
- **The coach** shall not scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school athletic association.

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

A Fact Sheet for Parents

FACTS

Sudden cardiac arrest is a rare, but tragic event that claims the lives of approximately 500 athletes each year in the United States. Sudden cardiac arrest can affect all levels of athletes, in all sports, and in all age levels. The majority of cardiac arrests are due to congenital (inherited) heart defects. However, sudden cardiac arrest can also occur after a person experiences an illness which has caused an inflammation to the heart or after a direct blow to the chest.

WARNING SIGNS

There may not be any noticeable symptoms before a person experiences loss of consciousness and a full cardiac arrest (no pulse and no breathing).

Warning signs can include a complaint of:

- Chest Discomfort
- Unusual Shortness of Breath
- Racing or Irregular Heartbeat
- Fainting or Passing Out

EMERGENCY SIGNS – Call EMS (911)

If a person experiences any of the following signs, call EMS (911) immediately:

- *If an athlete collapses suddenly during competition*
- *If a blow to the chest from a ball, puck or another player precedes an athlete's complaints of any of the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest*
- *If an athlete does not look or feel right and you are just not sure*

How can I help my child prevent a sudden cardiac arrest?

Daily physical activity, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep are all important aspects of life-long health. Additionally, parents can assist student athletes prevent a sudden cardiac arrest by:

- Ensuring your child knows about any family history of sudden cardiac arrest (onset of heart disease in a family member before the age of 50 or a sudden, unexplained death at an early age)
- Ensuring your child has a thorough pre-season screening exam prior to participation in an organized athletic activity
- Asking if your school and the site of competition has an automatic defibrillator (AED) that is close by and properly maintained
- Learning CPR yourself
- Ensuring your child is not using any non-prescribed stimulants or performance enhancing drugs
- Being aware that the inappropriate use of prescription medications or energy drinks can increase risk
- Encouraging your child to be honest and report symptoms of chest discomfort, unusual shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or feeling faint

What should I do if I think my child has warning signs that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest?

1. *Tell your child's coach about any previous events or family history*
2. *Keep your child out of play*
3. *Seek medical attention right away*

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

A Fact Sheet for Student Athletes

FACTS

Sudden cardiac arrest can occur even in athletes who are in peak shape. Approximately 500 deaths are attributed to sudden cardiac arrest in athletes each year in the United States. Sudden cardiac arrest can affect all levels of athletes, in all sports, and in all age levels. The majority of cardiac arrests are due to congenital (inherited) heart defects. However, sudden cardiac arrest can also occur after a person experiences an illness which has caused an inflammation to the heart or after a direct blow to the chest. Once a cardiac arrest occurs, there is very little time to save the athlete, so identifying those at risk before the arrest occurs is a key factor in prevention.

WARNING SIGNS

There may not be any noticeable symptoms before a person experiences loss of consciousness and a full cardiac arrest (no pulse and no breathing).

Warning signs can include a complaint of:

- Chest Discomfort
- Unusual Shortness of Breath
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- *If an athlete does not look or feel right and you are just not sure*

How can I help prevent a sudden cardiac arrest?

Daily physical activity, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep are all important aspects of life-long health. Additionally, you can assist by:

- Knowing if you have a family history of sudden cardiac arrest (onset of heart disease in a family member before the age of 50 or a sudden, unexplained death at an early age)
- Telling your health care provider during your pre-season physical about any unusual symptoms of chest discomfort, shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or feeling faint, especially if you feel these symptoms with physical activity
- Taking only prescription drugs that are prescribed to you by your health care provider
- Being aware that the inappropriate use of prescription medications or energy drinks can increase your risk
- Being honest and reporting symptoms of chest discomfort, unusual shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or feeling faint

What should I do if I think I am developing warning signs that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest?

1. *Tell an adult – your parent or guardian, your coach, your athletic trainer or your school nurse*
2. *Get checked out by your health care provider*
3. *Take care of your heart*
4. *Remember that the most dangerous thing you can do is to do nothing*

HEADS x 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"> • 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 • Just “not feeling right” or “feeling down” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 mood, behavior, or personality changes

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.

HEADS ^x 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.

