

A FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

HEADS UP: Concussion in High School Sports

The Iowa Legislature passed a new law, effective July 1, 2011, regarding students in grades 7 – 12 who participate in extracurricular interscholastic activities. Please note this important information from Iowa Code Section 280.13C, *Brain Injury Policies*:

- (1) A child must be immediately removed from participation (practice or competition) if his/her coach or a contest official observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury in an extracurricular interscholastic activity.
- (2) A child may not participate again until a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and other brain injuries has evaluated him/her and the student has received written clearance from that person to return to participation.
- (3) Key definitions:
 - “Licensed health care provider” means a physician, physician assistant, chiropractor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, physical therapist, or athletic trainer licensed by a board.
 - “Extracurricular interscholastic activity” means any extracurricular interscholastic activity, contest, or practice, including sports, dance, or cheerleading.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

What parents/guardians should do if they think their child has a concussion?

1. OBEY THE NEW LAW.
 - a. Keep your child out of participation until s/he is cleared to return by a licensed healthcare provider.
 - b. Seek medical attention right away.
2. Teach your child that it’s not smart to play with a concussion.
3. Tell all of your child’s coaches and the student’s school nurse about ANY concussion.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You cannot see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days after the injury. If your teen reports one or more symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, keep your teen out of play and seek medical attention right away.

STUDENTS:

If you think you have a concussion:

- Tell your coaches & parents – Never ignore a bump or blow to the head, even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if you think one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- Get a medical check-up – A physician or other licensed health care provider can tell you if you have a concussion, and when it is OK to return to play.
- Give yourself time to heal – If you have a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. It is important to rest and not return to play until you get the OK from your health care professional.

IT’S BETTER TO MISS ONE CONTEST THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.

Signs Reported by Students:

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

PARENTS:

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 and other injuries.

- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. It should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Ensure that they follow their coaches’ rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians:

- 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
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

Information on concussions provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information visit: www.cdc.gov/Concussion

IMPORTANT: Students participating in interscholastic athletics, cheerleading and dance; and their parents/guardians; must annually sign the acknowledgement below and return it to their school. Students cannot practice or compete in those activities until this form is signed and returned.

We have received the information provided on the concussion fact sheet titled, “HEADS UP: Concussion in High School Sports.”

Student’s Signature _____

Date _____

Student’s Printed Name _____

Parent’s/Guardian’s Signature _____

Date _____

Student’s Grade _____

Student’s School _____

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

Iowa Code Section 280.13C states, in part, "Annually, each school district and nonpublic school shall provide to the parent or guardian of each student a concussion and brain information sheet, as provided by the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union. The student and student's parent or guardian shall sign and return the concussion and brain injury information sheet to the student's school prior to the student's participation in any interscholastic activity for grades seven through twelve. If a student's coach or contest official observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury in an extracurricular interscholastic activity, the student shall be immediately removed for participation. A student who has been removed from participation shall not recommence such participation until the student has been evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and other brain injuries and the student has received written clearance to return to participation from the health care provider.

For the purposes of this section, a licensed health care provider means a physician, physician's assistant, chiropractor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, physical therapist, or licensed athletic trainer.

For the purposes of this section, an extracurricular interscholastic activity means any extracurricular interscholastic activity, contest, or practice, including sports, dance, and cheerleading."

1. No student should return to play/competition (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
2. A licensed health care provider should evaluate a student suspected of having a concussion on the same day the injury occurs.
3. After medical clearance, RTP should follow a stepwise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based upon return of any signs or symptoms.
4. Education of contest officials, school coaches and other appropriate school personnel, contestants, parents, and licensed health care providers.
 - The Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union will provide a variety of educational materials related to concussions and brain injuries developed by the CDC and other organizations knowledgeable about concussions.
5. Removing an injured student from participation, deciding whether he or she has sustained a concussion, and return to participation protocol.
 - It is the responsibility of the contest officials' and the student's coach to recognize that a student may be exhibiting signs, symptoms, & behaviors of a concussion and remove him or her from the contest. Once the student has been removed from the contest, the officials' responsibility for the student's safety is over and the student is in the care of the school's coach and any licensed health care providers as defined in Iowa Code 280.13C.
 - A student removed from participation due to exhibiting signs, symptoms, & behaviors of a concussion shall not recommence such participation until a licensed health care provider has provided written clearance for the student to return to participation.
 - Licensed health care providers should follow return to participation (*practice and competition*) protocol before allowing a student who has been exhibiting signs, symptoms, & behaviors of a concussion to return to any kind of participation (*practice and/or competition*).