



HEADS UP CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

A fact sheet for **ATHLETES**

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

- A concussion is a brain injury that:
- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head.
 - Can change the way your brain normally works.
 - Can occur during any sport.
 - Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
 - Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light
- Bothered by noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- Tell your coach or your parents. Always ignore a concussion, even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.

- **Get a medical check up.** A doctor or health care professional should tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.

- **Give yourself time to get better.** 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 second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself:

- Follow your coach's rules and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:

- > **Used** before the game, practice, or activity.
- > **Worn** under the right conditions.
- > **Used** every time you play.

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.