



# Jeffco Midget Football Association

of Jefferson County & Denver Colorado Suburbs

## Parent-Athlete Concussion Information Sheet

**Parents and Student-athletes: Please read, sign, and keep a copy.  
You must turn in a signed form prior to the start of practice.**

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your student-athlete reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

### **Symptoms may include one or more of the following:**

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headaches</li><li>• “Pressure in head”</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Neck pain</li><li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li><li>• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision</li><li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li><li>• Feeling sluggish or slowed down</li><li>• Feeling foggy or groggy</li><li>• Drowsiness</li><li>• Change in sleep patterns</li><li>• Amnesia</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don’t feel right”</li><li>• Fatigue or low energy</li><li>• Sadness</li><li>• Nervousness or anxiety</li><li>• Irritability</li><li>• More emotional</li><li>• Confusion</li><li>• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)</li><li>• Repeating the same question/ comment</li></ul> |
|--|--|

### **Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appears dazed</li><li>• Vacant facial expression</li><li>• Confused about assignment</li><li>• Forgets plays</li><li>• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent</li><li>• Moves clumsily or displays incoordination</li><li>• Answers questions slowly</li><li>• Slurred speech</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shows behavior or personality changes</li><li>• Can’t recall events prior to hit</li><li>• Can’t recall events after hit</li><li>• Seizures or convulsions</li><li>• Any change in typical behavior or personality</li><li>• Loses consciousness</li></ul> |
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## Concussion Information Sheet

### What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns to soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athlete will often under report symptoms of injuries. And concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete's safety.

### If you think your child has suffered a concussion

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The Howard County Public School System requires the consistent and uniform implementation of well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years:

“a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time”

and

“...may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider”.

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student-athlete Name Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student-athlete Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## THE FACTS

- All concussions are *serious*.
- Most concussions occur *without* loss of consciousness.
- Recognition and proper response to concussions when they *first occur* can help prevent further injury or even death.

There's no doubt about it: sports are a great way for kids and teens to stay healthy while learning important team-building skills. But there are risks to pushing the limits of speed, strength, and endurance. And athletes who push the limits sometimes don't recognize their own *limitations*—especially when they've had a concussion.

That's where you come in. It's up to you, as a coach, to help recognize concussion and make the call to pull an athlete off of the field if you think an athlete might have one. Playing with a concussion can lead to long-term problems. It can even be *fatal*.

## What Is a Concussion?

A bump, blow, or jolt to the head can cause a concussion, a type of traumatic brain injury. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth—literally causing the brain to bounce around or twist within the skull. This sudden movement of the brain causes stretching, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. Once these changes occur, the brain is more vulnerable to further injury and sensitive to any increased stress until it fully recovers.



Unlike a broken ankle, or other injuries you can feel with your hands, or see on an x-ray, a concussion is a disruption of how the brain works. It is **not** a "bruise to the brain."



## How Can I Recognize a Possible Concussion?

On the football field, concussions can result from a fall or from players colliding with each other, the ground, or an obstacle, such as a goalpost. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

As a coach you are on the front line in identifying an athlete with a suspected concussion. You know your athletes well and can recognize when something is off—even when the player doesn't know it or doesn't want to admit it.

**Sometimes people wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play while injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Some athletes may also try to hide their symptoms. Don't let your athlete convince you that he is "just fine" or that he can "tough it out." Emphasize to athletes and parents that playing with a concussion is dangerous.**

Remember, you can't see a concussion, like you can see a broken ankle, and there is no one single indicator for concussion. Recognizing a concussion requires watching for different types of signs or symptoms.

So to help recognize a concussion, you should watch for and ask others to report the following two things among your athletes:

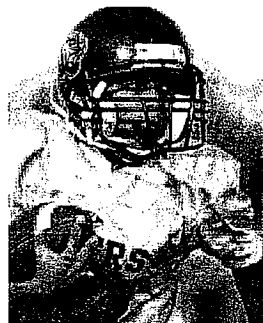
1. A forceful bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.  
-and-
2. Any concussion signs or symptoms, such as a change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.

## What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Concussion?

Athletes who experience **one or more** of the signs and symptoms listed below, or who report that they just "don't feel right," after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appears dazed or stunned (such as glassy eyes)</li> <li>• Is confused about assignment or position</li> <li>• Forgets an instruction or play</li> <li>• Is unsure of score or opponent</li> <li>• Moves clumsily or poor balance</li> <li>• Answers questions slowly</li> <li>• Loses consciousness (<i>even briefly</i>)</li> <li>• Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes</li> <li>• Can't recall events <i>prior</i> to hit or fall</li> <li>• Can't recall events <i>after</i> hit or fall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headache or "pressure" in head</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li> <li>• Double or blurry vision</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li> <li>• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy</li> <li>• Concentration or memory problems</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"</li> </ul>

Signs and symptoms of concussion generally show up soon after the injury. But the full effect of the injury may not be noticeable at first. For example, in the first few minutes the athlete might be slightly confused or appear a little bit dazed, but an hour later they can't recall coming to the practice or game.



So assess the player, then assess the player again, then re-assess the player even later. Make sure that the athlete is supervised for at least one or two hours after you suspect a concussion. Any worsening of concussion signs or symptoms indicates a medical emergency.

## Why Should I Be Concerned about Concussions?

Most athletes with a concussion will recover quickly and fully. But for some athletes, signs and symptoms of concussion can last for days, weeks, or longer.

### Did You Know?

- Athletes who have ever had a concussion are at increased risk for another concussion.
- Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults.

So why is it so important for you to remove an athlete from play?

If an athlete has a concussion, his brain needs time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short time period (hours, days, weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the chances for long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in brain swelling or permanent brain damage. They can even be *fatal*.

## What Are Concussion Danger Signs?

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain of an athlete with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1 or take the athlete to the emergency department right away if after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body he exhibits **one or more** of the following danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

## What Should I Do If a Concussion Is Suspected?

You know that one of the keys to being a good coach is keeping your athletes safe and preparing them for the future—whether it is learning good teamwork or honing their athletic skills. But you also know that there are *unacceptable risks in sports*, especially when it comes to the brain.



So no matter whether the athlete is a key member of the team or the game is about to end, an athlete with a suspected concussion should be immediately removed from play. To help you know how to respond, follow the “Heads Up” four-step action plan if you suspect that an athlete has a concussion:

1. **Remove the athlete from play.** Look for signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body. *When in doubt, sit them out.*
2. **Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury:
  - Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head or body
  - Any loss of consciousness (*passed out/knocked out*) and if so, for how long

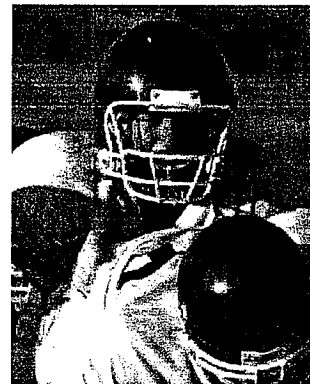
- Any memory loss immediately following the injury
- Any seizures immediately following the injury
- Number of previous concussions (*if any*)

3. **Inform the athlete’s parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them information on concussion.** This fact sheet can help parents monitor the athlete for sign or symptoms that appear or get worse once the athlete is at home or returns to school.
4. **Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until an appropriate health care professional says they are symptom-free and it’s OK to return to play.** After you remove an athlete with a suspected concussion from practice or play, the decision about when to return to practice or play is a medical decision.

## How Can I Help Athletes to Return to Play Gradually?

Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. After a concussion the torn or stretched brain cells need the body’s energy to heal. So the more energy an athlete uses doing activities, the less energy that goes to help the brain heal.

That’s why ignoring concussion symptoms and trying to “tough it out” often makes symptoms worse. For example, exercising 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. So only when an athlete’s symptoms have reduced significantly, in consultation with their health care professional, should he slowly and gradually return to daily activities, such as school. Physical and cognitive activities—such as concentration and learning—should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional.



### ***Progressive Return to Activity Program:***

An athlete should return to sports practices under the supervision of an appropriate health care professional. When available, be sure to work closely with your team's certified athletic trainer.

**Below are five gradual steps that you and the health care professional should follow to help safely return an athlete to play. Remember, this is a gradual process. These steps should not be completed in one day, but instead over days, weeks, or months.**

**Step 1:** Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete's heart rate. This means about 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking, or light jogging. No weight lifting at this point.

**Step 2:** Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, moderate-intensity weight lifting (reduced time and/or reduced weight from the athlete's typical routine).

**Step 3:** Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weight lifting routine, non-contact sport-specific drills (in three planes of movement).

**Step 4:** Athlete may return to practice and full contact in controlled practice.

**Step 5:** Athlete may return to football competition.

As a coach, you should pay careful attention to an athlete's symptoms, as well as the athlete's thinking and concentration skills at each stage of activity. Any symptoms should be reported to their health care provider. If an athlete's symptoms come back or he gets new symptoms as he becomes more active at any stage, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing himself too hard. An athlete should only move to the next level of activity if he does not experience any symptoms at each level. If an athlete's symptoms return, he should stop these activities and the athlete's health care provider should be contacted. After more rest and an okay from his health care provider, the athlete should return to the first level and he should then restart the program gradually.

## **How Can I Help Prevent and Prepare for Concussions?**

**Insist that safety comes first.** No one technique or piece of safety equipment is 100 percent effective in preventing concussion, but there are things you can do to help minimize the risks for concussion and other injuries. For example, to help prevent injuries, ensure that athletes:

- Practice "Heads Up" football—never lower your head during a hit.
- Use proper techniques in blocking and tackling. Learn and apply the fundamentals.
- Follow the rules of play and practice good sportsmanship and self-control at all times.
- Wear properly-fitted helmets and protective equipment. Helmets and other protective equipment should be well-maintained and be worn consistently and correctly. This includes buckling the chin strap on helmets at all times.
- Understand that helmets can help protect their head and brain, but they are not 100 percent effective in preventing concussions.

**Check with your league, school, or district about concussion policies.** Concussion policy statements can be developed to include the school or league's commitment to safety, a brief description of concussion, and information on when athletes can safely return to play. Parents and athletes should sign the concussion policy statement at the beginning of the football season.

Involve and get support from other school or league officials—such as principals, certified athletic trainers, other coaches, school nurses, and parent-teacher associations—to help ensure that school or league rules and concussion policies are in place before the first football practice.



### **WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT**

For more information and safety resources, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion) or [www.usafootball.com](http://www.usafootball.com).

## Concussion Resources

1. CDC Concussion Toolkits  
[www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion)
  - Youth Coaches
  - High School Coaches
  - Schools
  - Physicians
2. Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association  
<http://www.wiaa.com/>
3. USA Football  
[http://www.usafootball.com/health\\_safety](http://www.usafootball.com/health_safety)