

HEADS+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.



Dear Parents and Athletes,

Cedar Hollow would like to introduce you to the **Nebraska Sports Concussion Network & Testing Program**. So that you may be fully informed about the services our school is acquiring, please take a moment to read the following information about this new program.

Our school will be participating in a sports concussion testing program as part of the **Nebraska Sports Concussion Network** through our association with **Nebraska Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine, PC** and **Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center**, both of Lincoln. These two outstanding sports medicine facilities have arranged for the funding and implementation of the testing program, which would otherwise be cost-prohibitive for us. Your son's/daughter's participation is highly encouraged, but voluntary, and is no cost to parents for the baseline testing.

The ImpACT™ Testing Program (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) is an on-line, user-friendly computer-based testing program specifically designed for the management of sports-related concussion. The major purpose of ImpACT™ testing is to assist everyone involved in making safer, more consistent concussion management decisions, particularly readiness to return to play.

The **Nebraska Sports Concussion Network** has arranged to fund ImpACT™ baseline testing for 9th – 12th grade athletes competing in a collision or contact sport at the high school level (football, volleyball, softball, wrestling, diving, boys & girls basketball and soccer, baseball, track-jumpers, and baseball).

We will be conducting *Neurocognitive Baseline Concussion Testing*, which refers to testing under normal conditions before injury, usually conducted in the pre-season. This is neither intelligence nor achievement testing. The baseline test gives us a snapshot of how one's brain functions in normal, everyday circumstances by evaluating memory, brain processing speed, attention, concentration, reaction time, and post-concussion symptoms. This baseline information is then stored on a secure, HIPPA compliant server at ImpACT™ Testing Services for accessing later if an athlete is concussed and needs post-injury testing.

In the event an athlete sustains a concussion, the athlete is tested again "post-injury" by a physician. *Post-Injury Testing scores* are then compared to the baseline scores acquired earlier and assessed for deficiencies or abnormalities. *Post-Injury Testing* is conducted by credentialed ImpACT physicians where usual office visit charges will likely apply as with any doctor visit or clinical test. It is fairly common however for most insurance companies to consider the post-test a covered medical service being performed in a physician's office. The physician will objectively base their decision for return to play on post-test comparisons, depending on when post-test scores return to baseline (normal), among other clinical considerations.

If you should have additional questions, I'll direct you to the **Nebraska Sports Concussion Network** website at www.NebSportsConcussion.org. If you should have further questions about participation in the program, please contact David Schultz, MEd, ATC, Testing Program Coordinator at dschultz@nebraskaortho.com or (888) 488-6667 ext. 3015.

Sincerely,

Scott Mazour