



# ***Concussion Management Policy Overview***

**City School District of Albany**

Department of Health, Physical Education  
& Athletics



# CSDA Concussion Management Policy

- After 6 months of research and development, the City School District of Albany adopted the Concussion Management Policy in August 2011.
- CSDA was one of the 1<sup>st</sup> school districts in our area to adopt the policy prior to NY State Legislation mandating it in Sept. 2011.
- Concussion Management Team (CMT)
  - The CMT consists of selected coaches, the Athletic Director, a school nurse, and an athletic trainer and/or chief medical officer. The District's CMT coordinates education about concussions for all CSDA staff and parents.
  - The CMT will act as a liaison for any student returning to school and/or play following a concussion. The CMT will review and/or design an appropriate plan for the student while the student is recovering.



# What is a Concussion?

## Mild Traumatic Brain Injury



“Any alteration of mental function following a blow or jolt to the head that may or may not involve a loss of consciousness”

American Academy of Neurology, 1997

- A concussion is a disturbance in the function of the brain caused by a direct or indirect force to the head. It results in a variety of symptoms (like those listed below) and may, or may not, involve memory problems or loss of consciousness.
- Concussion may be caused by either a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive” force transmitted to the head.
- Concussion typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurological function that resolves spontaneously (Usually improves in 7-10 days, but each case is different).
- Concussion may result in neuropathological changes but the acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than structural injury.
- Concussion is typically associated with normal neuroimaging studies such as MRI or CT Scans.

**A Concussion Is A Brain Injury !!!**

# What are the signs/symptoms of a Concussion?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury. Concussion symptoms include:

- Amnesia.
- Headache.
- Balance problems or dizziness.
- Sensitivity to light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, foggy or groggy.
- Slowed reaction time.
- Concentration or memory problems  
(forgetting game plays, facts, meeting times).
- Confusion.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Double or fuzzy vision.
- Nausea (feeling that you might vomit).
- Feeling unusually irritable.

Exercise 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.



# Athletes: What should you do if you think you have a Concussion?

- Tell your coaches, athletic trainer, school nurse and your parents. Never ignore a bump or blow to the head 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 can 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.

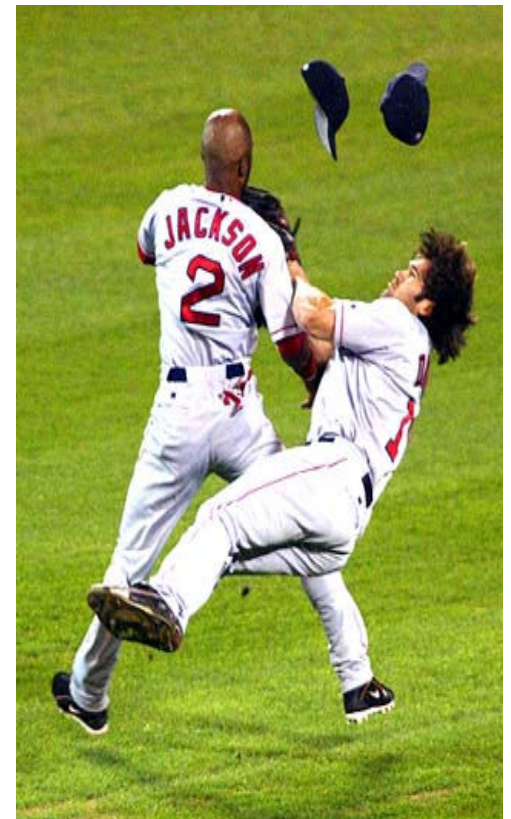
## HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

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

- Follow your coach's rules for safety 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, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
  - \* The right equipment for the game, position, or activity.
  - \* Worn correctly and fit well.
  - \* Used every time you play.

# Parents/Guardians: 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 sports.
- Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play 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 second concussion. Second 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 recent concussion. Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.



# Return To Play (RTP) Protocol

- No RTP on the same day of injury!
- No RTP without Physician clearance!
- No Exceptions!
- Avoiding re-injury and overexertion until fully recovered are the cornerstones of proper concussion management.
- Second Impact Syndrome can be devastating and is caused by not allowing the brain to properly heal from the first injury. Most often receiving a second blow/jolt to the head prior to the initial concussion healing causes significant damage to the brain and requires a much longer recovery time. An increase in HR should also be avoided in order to allow the brain a stress free environment in which to heal.



# Management of a Concussion

- After diagnosis of a concussion, by a treating physician, the student will be removed from all activity for a **minimum of 7 days** (even if asymptomatic).
- Once the student athlete is symptom-free at rest for 24 hours following the 7 day rest period and has a signed release by the treating physician and the school chief medical officer, she/he may begin the Return to Play Progression. (Provided there are no other mitigating circumstances).
- The student shall not return to activity until authorized to do so by the school's chief medical officer. The school's chief medical officer will make the final decision on return to activity, including physical education class and after-school sports.



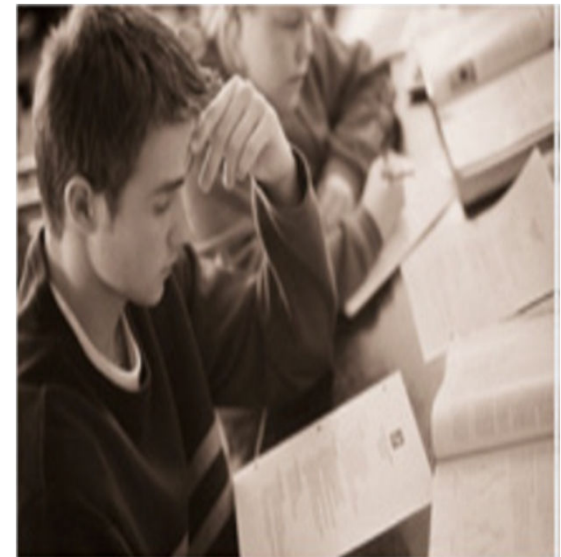
# Return To Play Progressions

- **Day 1:** Light aerobic activity - low impact, non-contact.  
(i.e. stationary bike, walking less than 70% Maximum Heart Rate)
- **Day 2:** Sport-specific activity – any simple movement that doesn't involve the risk of a collision (sport specific skills at moderate intensity).
- **Day 3:** Non-contact training drills – sport specific drills at full intensity  
(no contact)
- **Day 4:** Full contact practice – normal training activities  
(after medical clearance)
- **Day 5:** Return to play – normal play is allowed, with close monitoring of symptoms

Each step should take 24 hours so that an athlete would take approximately one week to proceed through the full rehabilitation protocol once they are asymptomatic at rest and with provocative exercise. If any post-concussion symptoms occur while in the stepwise program, then the student should drop back to the previous asymptomatic level and try to progress again after a further 24-hour period of rest has passed.

# Return to School Considerations

- The student shall not return to school until authorized to do so by an appropriate health care professional.
- If any student sustains a concussion at a time other than when engaged in a school-sponsored activity, the District expects the parent/legal guardian to report the condition to the building nurse so that the District can support the appropriate management of the condition.
- All medical paperwork should be brought to the school nurse.
- The school nurse will then assist in developing a plan for the student in conjunction with the student's guidance counselor and/or teachers.



IF IN DOUBT .....  
SIT THEM OUT!!!

*It is better to miss one  
or two contests rather  
than an entire season or  
career!!!*



# Additional Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/)

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

- [NYS Department of Health](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/concussion.htm)

[http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury\\_prevention/concussion.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/concussion.htm)

- [Concussion in Sports - Educational Course](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html)

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