



# Concussion Fact Sheet for Parents and Athletes

## What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport or recreational activity
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged" or "had your bell rung."

*All concussions are serious.* A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities (such as playing video games, working on a computer, studying, driving, or exercising). Most people with a concussion get better, but it is important to give your brain time to heal.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

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 after the injury.

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians	Symptoms Reported by Athlete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appears dazed or stunned</li> <li>• Is confused about assignment or position</li> <li>• Forgets an instruction</li> <li>• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent</li> <li>• Moves clumsily</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>• Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"</li> </ul>

## How can I prevent a concussion?

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

- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment. In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
  - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
  - Worn correctly and the correct size and fit
  - Used every time you play or practice
- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

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

For more information visit: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).

## **What should you do if you think you suspect a concussion?**

### **1. Keep out of play.**

If an athlete has a concussion, her/his brain needs time to heal. Don't return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says the athlete is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

**2. Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your teen to return to sports.

### **3. It's not smart to play with a concussion.**

Rest is key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let the athlete convince you that s/he's "just fine."

### **4. Tell the coaches, athletic trainers, and school nurse about ANY concussion.**

Coaches, athletic trainers, school nurses, and other school staff should know if the athlete has ever had a concussion. Activities may need to be limited while s/he is recovering from a concussion. Things such as studying, driving, working on a computer, playing video games, or exercising may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. Talk to your health care professional, as well as your teen's coaches, athletic trainer, school nurse, and teachers. If needed, they can help adjust your teen's school activities during her/his recovery.



## **ImPACT Concussion Management**

Grand Forks Public Schools, in conjunction with Altru Health System, have implemented a tool called ImPACT to help with the management of concussions and to develop safe return-to-play guidelines.

ImPACT (Immediate Post-concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) is a research based computer test developed to help evaluate an athlete's recovery following a concussion. Each athlete is given a baseline test before the season. When a concussion is suspected during the season, a follow-up test is administered to see if the results have changed from the baseline. This comparison helps to direct the management of the concussion. Follow up tests can be taken over days/weeks to continue to track the athlete's recovery. Conducting baseline and post-injury neurocognitive testing using ImPACT helps to objectively evaluate an athlete's cognitive status to prevent the cumulative effects of concussion.

Athletes, in 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, participating in contact and limited contact sports will be given a baseline test every two years. Contact and limited contact sports are football, soccer, volleyball, diving, wrestling, gymnastics, basketball, hockey, pole vault, high jump, baseball, softball and cheerleading.

ImPACT has been studying sports-related concussion for over fifteen years. If an athlete in a non contact sport gets a concussion, then ImPACT has a normative database of thousands of non-injured athletes, which can be used for evaluation and comparison.

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# Grand Forks Public Schools

## Concussion Management Information Verification

The Grand Forks Public Schools is providing the attached concussion management information as required by North Dakota State Law (NDCC 15.1-18.2). The statute requires that each student and their parent/guardian shall document that they have viewed information regarding concussions that may be incurred by students participating in athletic activities. This form must be signed and returned to the coach/school prior to the athlete beginning practice. By signing below, the student and their parent are verifying that they have reviewed the concussion information.

*For student 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade participating in contact and limited contact sports:*

Permission is granted to have baseline test and post-concussion ImPACT (Immediate Post-concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) Test. I understand that after a concussion the student may be tested more than once depending upon the results of the test when compared to the baseline test. I understand there is no charge for the testing. I understand that general information about the test data may be provided to my child's guidance counselor and teachers, for the purposes of providing temporary academic modifications, if necessary. By signing below, the student and their parent are giving consent for cognitive testing.

I have reviewed the attached concussion management information and give consent for cognitive testing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Athlete's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Athlete's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN THIS SIGNED VERIFICATION FORM  
TO YOUR COACH OR SCHOOL OFFICE.**

