

A FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS HEADS UP: CONCUSSION IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

The Iowa Legislature passed a new law, effective July 1, 2011, regarding students in grades 7-12 who participate in extracurricular interscholastic activities. Please note this important information from Iowa Code Section 280.13C, Brain Injury Policies:

1. A child must be immediately removed from participation (practice or competition) if his/her coach or a contest official observes signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or brain injury in an extracurricular interscholastic activity.
2. A child may not participate again until a licensed healthcare provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and other brain injuries has evaluated him/her and the student has received written clearance from that person to return to participation.
3. Key definitions
 - a. Licensed healthcare provider means a physician, physician assistant, chiropractor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, physical therapist or athletic trainer licensed by a board
 - b. Extracurricular interscholastic activity means any extracurricular interscholastic activity, contest, or practice including sports, dance and cheerleading

What is a concussion? A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

What should parents/guardians do if they think their child has a concussion? Obey the new law. Keep your child out of participation until s/he is cleared to return by a licensed healthcare provider. Seek medical attention right away. Teach your child it's not smart to play with a concussion. Tell all of your child's coaches and the student's school nurse about ANY concussion.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion? You can not 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. If your teen reports one or more symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, keep your teen out of play and seek medical attention right away.

Students: If you think you have a concussion

- Tell your coaches and parents - never ignore a bump or blow to the head, even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if you think one of your teammates might have a concussion
- Get a medical checkup - a physician or licensed healthcare provider can tell you if you have a concussion, and when it is ok to return to play
- Give yourself time to heal - if you have a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. It is important to rest and not return to play until you get the ok from your healthcare professional. It's better to miss one contest than the whole season.

Signs of concussion reported by students

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

How can parents help children prevent a concussion? Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion and other injuries. Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. It should fit properly, be well maintained and be worn consistently and correctly. Ensure they follow their coaches’ rules for safety and the rules of the sport. Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship all the time.

Signs of concussion observed by parents/guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about the 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
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

Information on concussions provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information visit www.cdc.gov/concussion

IMPORTANT: Students participating in interscholastic athletics, cheerleading and dance; and their parents/guardians; must sign the acknowledgement below and return it to their school. Students can not practice or compete in those activities until this form is signed and returned.

We have received the information provided on the concussion fact sheet titled, “HEADS UP: Concussion in High School Sports.”

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Student Printed Name _____

Student’s School _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____