

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The School District's number one priority is to make sure all its students are safe both on and off the field. With the **alarming rise in recreation and sports-related concussions** in this country (85% of last year's 3.8 million concussions went undiagnosed), we want to help students and parents understand the complications of such head injuries and in turn, how to treat them before a problem arises.

We have purchased the latest **concussion assessment and cognitive testing software** from ImPACT Applications, Inc to guide athletes, coaches, parents and doctors through the concussion recovery process. All Dobbs Ferry Schools winter athletes will be required to take the computerized test prior to the November 14<sup>th</sup> start of the season. The online program takes about 30 minutes to complete (it is based on a video game format), and will be administered in Physical Education classes to students participating on Varsity, JV and Modified teams. The Physical Education teachers and any other coaches will be trained on the program immediately via a webinar that is available through the company website. The test is presently utilized by many colleges and universities as well as professional sports organizations such as the NFL, MLB, NBA and NHL.

Our schools' physician and nurses agree that it is important to manage concussions on an individualized basis, and to implement baseline testing as well as post-injury cognitive testing to objectively evaluate the athlete's condition and track recovery for their safe return to play. The program measures an athlete's memory, reaction time, processing speed and concentration. It is a simple, non-invasive medical tool to help gauge the severity of a head injury.

The procedures for an injured player will include:

- The athlete is removed from play.
- If the parent is not present, the coach will contact the parent and report the injury and inform them that they must contact the child's pediatrician to be evaluated. The coach or athletic director will also contact our school physician.
- As per ImPACT guidelines, the athlete will be out of play for a minimum of eight days. Once medically cleared, the athlete will follow a "return-to-play" protocol.
- ImPACT test will be re-administered in three days and prior to any "return to play."
- The student must be cleared by their primary care physician **and** school physician.

This year our goal is to administer the ImPACT test to all winter athletes prior to the November 14<sup>th</sup> start of the season and to all Spring athletes prior to try outs. In the summer, all athletes trying out for Fall sports will be required to be tested. Moving forward, ImPACT also has a side-line assessment tool that will be used when a student athlete is injured. Eventually all students will be tested in grades 7, 9 and 11 since the test only needs to be administered every two years. This will become part of our routine health assessments.

General information about managing concussions and ImPACT testing is available on the District's website [www.dfsd.org](http://www.dfsd.org) and ImPACT's website at <http://impacttest.com> While concussions are not preventable, the best way to prevent difficulties with a concussion is to manage the injury properly when it does occur. I hope to see you on the Eagles sidelines and in the stands!

Sincerely,

Lisa Brady Ed.D  
Superintendent

# Heads Up to Schools: KNOW YOUR CONCUSSION ABCs

**A**ssess the situation  
**B**e alert for signs and symptoms  
**C**ontact a health care professional



## A Fact Sheet for Parents

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious.

Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be addressed correctly.

### What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after an injury or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury. It is important to watch for changes in how your child or teen is acting or feeling, if symptoms are getting worse, or if s/he just "doesn't feel right." Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

If your child or teen reports *one or more* of the symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away. Children and teens are among those at greatest risk for concussion.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

### SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about events
- Answers questions slowly
- Repeats questions
- Can't recall events *prior* to the hit, bump, or fall
- Can't recall events *after* the hit, bump, or fall
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Forgets class schedule or assignments

### SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD OR TEEN

#### Thinking/Remembering:

- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Feeling more slowed down
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy

#### Physical:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Does not "feel right"

#### Emotional:

- Irritable
- Sad
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous

#### Sleep\*:

- Drowsy
- Sleeps *less* than usual
- Sleeps *more* than usual
- Has trouble falling asleep

*\*Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.*


To download this fact sheet in Spanish, please visit: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion). Para obtener una copia electrónica de esta hoja de información en español, por favor visite: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).



# DANGER SIGNS

Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. Your child or teen should be seen in an emergency department right away if s/he has:

- One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other
- Drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)



Children and teens with a concussion should **NEVER** return to sports or recreation activities on the same day the injury occurred. They should delay returning to their activities until a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. This means, until permitted, not returning to:

- Physical Education (PE) class,
- Sports practices or games, or
- Physical activity at recess.

## What should I do if my child or teen has a concussion?

1. **Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion can determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child or teen to return to normal activities, including physical activity and school (concentration and learning activities).
2. **Help them take time to get better.** If your child or teen has a concussion, her or his brain needs time to heal. Your child or teen may need to limit activities while s/he is recovering from a concussion. 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. After a concussion, physical and cognitive activities—such as concentration and learning—should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional.
3. **Together with your child or teen, learn more about concussions.** Talk about the potential long-term effects of concussion and the dangers of returning too soon to normal activities (especially physical activity and learning/concentration). For more information about concussion and free resources, visit: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion).

## How can I help my child return to school safely after a concussion?

Help your child or teen get needed support when returning to school after a concussion. Talk with your child's teachers, school nurse, coach, speech-language pathologist, or counselor about your child's concussion and symptoms. Your child may feel frustrated, sad, and even angry because s/he cannot return to recreation and sports right away, or cannot keep up with schoolwork. Your child may also feel isolated from peers and social networks. Talk often with your child about these issues and offer your support and encouragement. As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually. Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed,
- Spend fewer hours at school,
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments,
- Receive help with schoolwork, and/or
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer.



\*To learn more about concussion and to order materials **FREE-OF-CHARGE**, go to: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion) or call 1.800.CDC.INFO.