



# CONCUSSION AND HEAD INJURY FACT SHEET FOR COACHES

## ***CYO Concussion Policy***

Any player who exhibits symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game or practice, and may not return until he or she has passed the sideline concussion evaluation and test. Every team will be issued a CYO concussion evaluation and test form that must be available at every practice and game. This form will be used to test memory function, concentration, balance, and check for concussion symptoms. If the athlete answers incorrectly to any of the questions, exhibits any single symptom or more of a concussion, or cannot perform the balance test, they may not under any circumstances, return to play for that day. If a player fails the concussion test, they may not return to play or practice until they have been cleared by a health care provider. **Written approval must be received before the young athlete may participate.**

## ***Definition of Concussion***

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull.

## ***Common Causes***

The potential for concussions is greatest in sports where contact to the head area can take place. Concussions can occur in any sport. Even a mild blow to the head, especially in the undeveloped brain of a child, can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall, or from players colliding with obstacles, such as goalposts.

## ***Signs and Symptoms***

It is important to note that concussions can occur without loss of consciousness. If a child exhibits even one of the signs or symptoms after contact involving the head, a concussion should be suspected. The child is not to return to a game or practice if a concussion is remotely suspected. They will not be permitted to play again until a written release has been obtained by a licensed health care provider.

The signs of a concussion:

1. Appears dazed or stunned
2. Confusion
3. Forgets plays, the score, the opponent, time of game, events
4. Moves **clumsily**
5. Answers questions slowly
6. Demonstrates behavior or personality changes
7. Headache or "pressure" in the head
8. Nausea or vomiting
9. Balance issues

10. Blurred vision
11. Sensitivity to light
12. Feeling sluggish or groggy
13. Concentration or memory problems
14. "Just does not feel right"

### ***Danger , Danger, Danger***

If even one of the following signs or symptoms are observed, it should be considered a medical emergency and 911 should be called:

1. One pupil larger than the other
2. Inability to wake up
3. A headache that gets worse and does not subside
4. Numbness
5. Decreased coordination
6. Repeated vomiting
7. Slurred speech
8. Convulsions
9. Loss of consciousness, however brief

### ***Why so serious?***

Following a concussion, the brain needs time to rest and heal. That is why it is important that children not resume normal activities, especially athletic competition, too soon. If the student returns before his/her brain is healed, they are at increased risk for a second concussion or a longer recovery. A repeat concussion can increase the chances for long-term brain damage. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

### ***Education Responsibility***

Beyond adhering to the CYO concussion policy and knowing the facts on concussions, it is the responsibility of a CYO coach to help educate the players and their parents on the dangers of concussions. Coaches are to distribute a fact sheet to the parents and players at the beginning of each season. Each coach must lead a discussion on the importance of this issue with their players and parents. **Concussion Baseline Testing should be part of this very important discussion.**

### ***Concussion Baseline Testing***

The CYO has partnered with the Athlete's Concussion Alliance and St. Vincent Sports Performance to provide free baseline testing to all young athletes participating in CYO sports 5<sup>th</sup> grade and older. This baseline test establishes an assessment of how the student's brain functions under normal circumstances. Should the athlete ever suffer a head injury following taking this baseline test, a repeated test taken can easily make a direct comparison to normal functions of the brain. It must be stressed that this testing is only one tool that is used to help an athlete that has suffered a mild traumatic brain injury to make a safe return to play. The information gleaned from this baseline test and the post-injury test can only be properly evaluated by a clinician with specific training in concussion management. Instructions for taking the CYO Baseline Test can be found on the CYO website.

### ***Concussion Training Videos***

All CYO coaches are to watch the free online concussion training video for coaches. This video takes approximately 30 minutes, including a post test. **What to do with the post test?** The concussion video can be accessed by logging onto: [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online\\_training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html)