



# Concussions

“When in doubt, sit them out.”

## ACCOMACK COUNTYS SCHOOLS

### Parent/Guardian and Student-Athlete Guide

Beginning July 1, 2011, the Code of Virginia §22.1-271.5 requires all school districts to develop guidelines and procedures to ensure that student -athletes who sustain concussions are properly diagnosed, given adequate time to heal, and are comprehensively supported until they are symptom free. The following information outlines the Accomack County Public Schools procedures for appropriate care of athletes who may experience a concussion.

#### Facts:

1. A concussion is a brain injury that is characterized by an onset of impairment of cognitive and/or physical functioning, and is caused by a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head.
2. You cannot see a concussion.
3. All concussions are serious.
4. Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness.
5. Some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury.
6. Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent injury or even death.

#### Signs and Symptoms

Listed below are suggested observations and questions that a non-medical individual can use to help determine whether an athlete has suffered a concussion from the National Federation of State High School Associations.

#### Problems in Brain Function

- a. **Confused state** – a dazed look, a vacant stare or confused about what has happened or is happening.
- b. **Memory problems**- can't remember assignment on play; opponent, score of game, or period of game; can't remember how or with whom he or she traveled to the game, or what he or she was wearing. What was eaten for breakfast, etc.

- c. **Symptoms reported by athlete-** Headache, nausea or vomiting; blurred or double vision; oversensitivity to sound, light or touch; ringing in ears; feeling foggy or groggy; dizziness.
- d. **Lack of sustained attention-** difficulty sustaining focus adequately to complete a task, a coherent thought or a conversation.

### **Speed of Brain Function**

Slow response to questions, slow slurred speech, slow body movements and slow reaction time.

### **Unusual Behaviors**

Behaving in a combative, aggressive or silly manner; atypical behavior for the individual; repeatedly asking the same question over and over; restless and irritable behavior with constant motion and attempts to return to play; reactions that seem out of proportion and inappropriate; and having trouble resting or “finding a comfortable position.”

### **Problems with Balance and Coordination**

Dizziness, slow clumsy movements, inability to walk a straight line or balance on one foot with eyes closed.

### **Athletic Regulations**

1. A student-athlete suspected by the coach, athletic trainer, or physician of sustaining a concussion or brain injury in any athletic event or practice will be **removed** from the activity at that time.
2. A student-athlete who has been removed from play, evaluated, and suspected to have a concussion or brain injury will not return to practice or play that same day nor until
  - a. He/she has been evaluated by an appropriate licensed health care provider. The approved health care providers are: a physician, physician assistant, osteopath or athletic trainer licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine; a neuropsychologist licensed by the Board of Psychology; or a nurse practitioner licensed by the Virginia State Board of Nursing.
  - b. He/she no longer exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, at rest or with exertion.
  - c. He/she has written clearance to return to practice and play from a licensed health care provider.
  - d. He/she is asymptomatic during, or following periods of supervised exercise that is gradually intensifying.

### **Academic Procedures**

Research states that mental exertion should be avoided until concussion symptoms have cleared. An athlete should not study, play video games, do computer work, or phone texting until his or her symptoms are clearing. While under the supervision of a physician, the parent may request an Individual Health Care Plan or a Temporary 504 Plan be developed until the student-athlete is released from the physician's care.