

# Parent & Athlete Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information Sheet

## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

Signs and symptoms of concussions can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury.

If an athlete reports one or more symptoms of a concussion after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, he/she should be kept out of play the day of the injury. The athlete should only return to play with permission from a health care professional experienced in evaluating concussions.

### Symptoms Reported by:

#### Athlete

- \* Headache or “pressure” in head
- \* Nausea or vomiting
- \* Balance problems or dizziness
- \* Sensitivity to light
- \* Double or blurry vision
- \* Feelings sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- \* Concentration or memory problems
- \* Confusion
- \* Just not “Feeling Right” or “Feeling down”

#### Coaches

- \* Appears dazed or stunned
- \* Is confused about assignment or position
- \* Forgets an instruction
- \* Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- \* Moves clumsily
- \* Answers questions slowly
- \* Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- \* Shows mood or behavior changes
- \* Personality Changes
- \* Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- \* Can’t recall events after hit or fall

### DID YOU KNOW?

- \* Most Concussions occur without loss of consciousness
- \* Athletes who have, at any point in their lives had a concussion have an increased risk for another concussion
- \* Young Children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults.

## **Concussion Danger Signs**

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. An athlete should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body he/she exhibits any of the following **danger signs**.

- \* One pupil larger than the other
- \* A headache that gets worse
- \* Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- \* Convulsions or Seizure
- \* Becomes increasingly confused, restless or agitated
- \* Loses consciousness (even briefly loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)
- \* Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- \* Repeated vomiting or nausea
- \* Slurred Speech
- \* Cannot recognize people and places
- \* Has unusual behavior

## **Why Should an Athlete Report Their Symptoms**

If an athlete has a concussion, his/her brain needs time to heal. While an athlete's brain is still healing, he/she is much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes to recover. In rare cases, repeat concussions in young adults can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to their brain. They can even be fatal.

## **What Should You Do If You Think Your Athlete Has a Concussion**

1. If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, remove the athlete from play and seek medical attention. Do not try and judge the severity of the injury yourself. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says he/she is symptom free and it's OK to return to play.
2. Rest is key to helping an athlete recover from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on a computer, and playing video games, may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be carefully monitored by a health care professional.
3. Remember: Concussions affect people differently. While most athletes with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

# **Fact Sheet for Parents and Athletes on Sudden Cardiac Arrest**

## **Facts**

Sudden cardiac arrest can occur in athletes who are in peak shape. Approximately 500 deaths are attributed to sudden cardiac arrest in athletes each year in the United States. Sudden cardiac arrest can affect all levels of athletes, in all sports, and at all ages. The majority of cardiac arrests are due to congenital (inherited) heart defects. However, sudden cardiac arrest can also occur after a person experiences an illness, which has caused an inflammation to the heart or after a direct blow to the chest. Once cardiac arrest occurs, there is very little time to save the athlete, so identifying those at risk before the arrest occurs is a key factor in prevention.

## **Warning Signs for Parents and Athletes**

There may not be any noticeable symptoms before a person experiences loss of consciousness and full cardiac arrest ( no pulse and no breathing).

Warning signs can include a complaint of:

- \* Chest Discomfort
- \* Unusual Shortness of Breath
- \* Racing or Irregular heartbeat
- \* Fainting or Passing Out

## **Emergency Signs-Call EMS (911)**

If a person experiences any of the following signs, call EMS (911) immediately:

- \* If an athlete collapses suddenly during competition
- \* If a blow to the chest from a ball, puck or another player precedes an athlete's complaints of any of the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest.
- \* If an athlete does not look or feel right and you are just not sure

## **How Can I Help Prevent Sudden Cardiac Arrest**

Daily physical activity, proper nutrition, and adequate sleep are all important aspects of life-long health. Additionally, parents and students can help prevent sudden cardiac arrest by:

- \* Ensuring your child knows about any family history of sudden cardiac arrest (onset of heart disease in family members before the age of 50 or a sudden, unexplained death at an early age).
- \* Ensuring your child has a thorough pre-season screening exam prior to participation in an organized athletic activity. During the exam let your health care provider know if you have had any symptoms (chest discomfort, shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or feeling faint) during exercise.
- \* Asking if your club and the site of competition has an automatic defibrillator (AED) that is close by and properly maintained.
- \* Learning CPR yourself

## **How Can I Help Prevent Sudden Cardiac Arrest cont.**

- \* Being aware that the inappropriate use of prescription medications or energy drinks can increase risk
- \* Ensuring your child is not using any non-prescribed stimulants or performance enhancing drugs.

### **What should I do if I think my child has warning signs that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest?**

1. Tell your child's coach about any previous events or family history
2. Keep your child out of play
3. Seek Medical attention right away

### **What should I do if I think I am developing warning signs that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest?**

1. Tell an adult- your parent or guardian, your coach, your athletic trainer or nurse.
2. Get checked out by your healthcare provider
3. Take care of your heart
4. Remember that the most dangerous thing you can do is to do nothing.

**CONCUSSION AND SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND  
SIGNATURE FORM FOR PARENTS AND STUDENT ATHLETES**

Student Athletes Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Sport Participating In (Current and Potential): \_\_\_\_\_

School: Boys & Girls Club of St. Joseph County

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Indiana Code (IC) 20-34-7 and IC 20-34-8 require schools and organizations to distribute information sheets to inform and educate student athletes and their parents on the nature and risk of concussion, head injury and sudden cardiac arrest to student athletes, including the risks of continuing to play after concussion or head injury. These laws require each year, before beginning practice for sports, a student athlete and athlete's parents or legal guardians must be given an information sheet, and both the student and student athlete's parents or legal guardians must sign and return a form acknowledging receipt of the information to the student's athletes coach.

IC 20-34-7 states that an athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game, shall be removed from play at the time of injury and may not return to play until the student athlete has received written clearance from a licensed healthcare provider.

IC 20-34-8 states that a student athlete who is suspected of experiencing symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest in a practice for athletic activity or in an athletic event shall be removed from practice or play until the coach and athletic director has received verbal permission from parent or legal guardian of the student athlete to return to practice and play. Within twenty-four (24) hours, this verbal permission must be replaced by a written statement from parent or guardian to be turned into the athletic office.

The Boys & Girls Club is exceeding that standard of IC 20-34-8 by requiring that a student athlete experiencing symptoms of cardiac arrest be removed from practice or play and **may not return to practice or play** until his/her coach and athletic director receives written clearance from a licensed physician.

Parent/Guardian- Please read the attached fact sheets regarding concussions and sudden cardiac arrest and ensure that your student athlete has received and read these facts. After reading these fact sheets, please ensure that you and your student athlete sign this form, and have your student athlete return this form to his/her coach.

\_\_\_\_\_

As a student athlete, I have received and read the Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Fact sheets for students. I understand the nature and risks of concussion, head injuries, and sudden cardiac arrest and continuing to play.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Student Athlete)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

I, as the parent or legal guardian of the above-named student, have received and read the Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Fact Sheets for parents. I understand the nature and risk of concussions, head injuries, and sudden cardiac arrest to student athletes, including the risks of continuing to play.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Parent or Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)