

Below is information mandated by the Louisiana Youth Concussion Act (RS 40-1299.181) regarding sport-related concussion:

## **WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?**

A concussion is a brain injury that results in your brain not working as it should. Any blow to the head, face, neck, or body that causes a sudden shaking or jarring of the brain inside the skull may cause a concussion. You do not have to get hit in the head to have a concussion. For example, receiving a hard hit in football or a collision with a wall or the ground that jars the head and neck can cause a concussion. Also, you do not need to lose consciousness to have a concussion. Only a small percentage of concussions result in loss of consciousness.

Concussions are not a structural injury (i.e. a skull fracture), but can better be described as a metabolic dysfunction that leaves the brain in a very vulnerable state and can change the way your brain normally works. This metabolic dysfunction can cause a myriad of symptoms that may not present themselves until hours or even days after the injury and typically presents differently for each student-athlete. Thus, each injury should be managed individually.

## **COMMON SYMPTOMS:**

You can't "see" a concussion per say, but you might notice some of the symptoms right away. Other symptoms can show up hours or days after the injury and can sometimes last for weeks or even longer in some cases. Concussion may cause one or multiple symptoms that can interfere with the student-athlete's academic, athletic, and personal or social life. Concussions occur most frequently in football, but women's soccer, men's and women's basketball, volleyball, and wrestling follow closely behind. All student-athletes are at risk. Concussion signs and symptoms include but are not limited to the following:

- Physical Symptoms: headache, nausea, vomiting, balance problems, dizziness, light-headedness, "pressure in head" sensation, neck pain, fatigue or low energy, sensitivity to light and/or noise, blurred or abnormal vision, numbness or tingling.
- Sleep Symptoms: sleeping less, sleeping more than usual, trouble falling asleep, drowsiness
- Emotional Symptoms: irritability, sadness, nervous or anxious, feeling more emotional than normal
- Cognitive symptoms: feeling slowed down, feeling like in a fog, difficulty concentrating, difficulty remembering

## **HOW LONG WILL SYMPTOMS LAST?**

The length of symptoms varies greatly between individuals. For some, symptoms may last less than 24 hours, while for others symptoms may last several weeks to months. Some concussion symptoms may not appear right away, over the first 48-72 hours these symptoms should evolve and peak. It is important to know that even after the physical symptoms are gone, the brain is still healing. It usually takes at least 1-2 weeks once symptom-free before you are safe to return to full participation. That is why it is important to follow an appropriate Return to Play Protocol supervised by a licensed healthcare professional.

## **CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?**

Preventing concussion injuries is challenging. The yolk of the egg floats inside and hits the eggshell when its shaken or jolted. Much like the egg yolk, your brain floats in cerebral spinal fluid within your skull. Today's helmet technology is advanced from its origins, but they still fail to prevent the brain from hitting the inside of the skull. Small steps like following your sport's rules, wearing equipment properly, avoiding to use the head as the primary point of contact or as a weapon, strengthening neck muscles to reduce whiplash probability and absorb forces may not prevent a concussion but could greatly decrease the chance of a concussion.

## Concussion Preseason Student & Parent Education

### LOUISIANA YOUTH CONCUSSION LAW (RS 40-1299.181) & CONCUSSION PROTOCOL(S):

Louisiana requires specific steps for student-athletes participating in organized (ages 7-19 y/o) as it relates to concussion injuries

- Any student-athlete suspected of a concussion is removed from practice / game and evaluated by a licensed healthcare provider
- Student-athletes are required to have written medical clearance from a medical professional (MD, DO, NP, PA or Psych), preferably trained in the management of concussion to return to practice / games and complete a graduated return to full athletic participation
- Annual education and course completion requirement for public/private schools and rec leagues/clubs' athletes, parents, coaches, & officials

### WHEN IN DOUBT SIT IT OUT:

The short-term and long-term effects of continuing to participate with concussion can be devastating. If a concussion is suspected, the student-athlete SHOULD NOT return to play or practice on that same day, as per LA Youth Concussion Law. The student-athlete should seek consultation from their licensed athletic trainer or healthcare provider. If your school's licensed athletic trainer isn't available, make sure to report to your team's coach or school nurse immediately. The long-term consequence of continuing to play through a concussion or returning too soon is Post-Concussive Syndrome. This results in long-term (often life-long) concussion symptoms.

The most serious risk of returning to play too soon is Second Impact Syndrome. Second Impact Syndrome is a severe condition that occurs when a student-athlete sustains a second blow to the head prior to the brain being fully recovered from the first concussion. Second Impact Syndrome is rare, but when it occurs, it is almost always fatal, resulting in death.

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ATHLETE'S (PATIENT'S) SIGNATURE

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PRINT ATHLETE'S NAME

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DATE

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PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE

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PRINT PARENT/GUARDIAN'S NAME

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DATE