

# A FACT SHEET FOR High School Parents



This sheet has information to help protect your teens from concussion or other serious brain injury.

## What Is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.

## How Can I Help Keep My Teens Safe?

Sports are a great way for teens to stay healthy and can help them do well in school. To help lower your teens' chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, you should:

- Help create a culture of safety for the team.
  - Work with their coach to teach ways to lower the chances of getting a concussion.
  - Emphasize the importance of reporting concussions and taking time to recover from one.
  - Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
  - Tell your teens that you expect them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- When appropriate for the sport or activity, teach your teens that they must wear a helmet to lower the chances of the most serious types of brain or head injury. There is no "concussion-proof" helmet. Even with a helmet, it is important for teens to avoid hits to the head.

## How Can I Spot a Possible Concussion?

Teens who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or simply say they just "don't feel right" after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body—may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

### Signs Observed by Parents

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

### Symptoms Reported by Teens

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down"

**Talk with your teens about concussion.** Tell them to report their concussion symptoms to you and their coach right away. Some teens think concussions aren't serious or worry that if they report a concussion they will lose their position on the team or look weak. Remind them that *it's better to miss one game than the whole season.*

**GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW:  
IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.**



[cdc.gov/HEADSUP](http://cdc.gov/HEADSUP)

# CONCUSSIONS AFFECT EACH TEEN DIFFERENTLY.

While most teens with a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks, some will have symptoms for months or longer. Talk with your teens' healthcare provider if their concussion symptoms do not go away or if they get worse after they return to their regular activities.



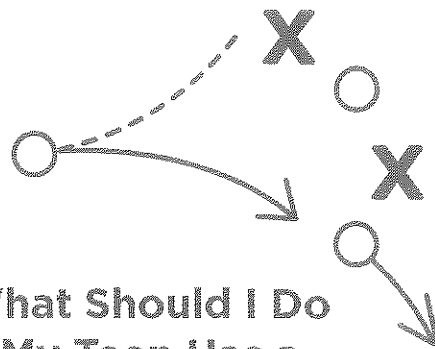
**Plan ahead.** What do you want your teen to know about concussion?

## What Are Some More Serious Danger Signs to Look Out For?

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1, or take your teen to the emergency department right away if, after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, he or she has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching)
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously

**Teens** who continue to play while having concussion symptoms or who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—have a greater chance of getting another concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs while the brain is still healing from the first injury can be very serious, and can affect a teen for a lifetime. It can even be fatal.



## What Should I Do If My Teen Has a Possible Concussion?

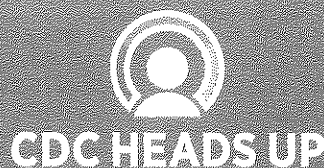
As a parent, if you think your teen may have a concussion, you should:

1. Remove your teen from play.
2. Keep your teen out of play the day of the injury. Your teen should be seen by a healthcare provider and only return to play with permission from a healthcare provider who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.
3. Ask your teen's healthcare provider for written instructions on helping your teen return to school. You can give the instructions to your teen's school nurse and teacher(s) and return-to-play instructions to the coach and/or athletic trainer.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a healthcare provider should assess a teen for a possible concussion. You may not know how serious the concussion is at first, and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days. A teen's return to school and sports should be a gradual process that is carefully managed and monitored by a healthcare provider.

Revised January 2019

To learn more,  
go to [cdc.gov/HEADSUP](https://www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP)



# A FACT SHEET FOR High School Athletes



This sheet has information to help you protect yourself from concussion or other serious brain injury and know what to do if a concussion occurs.

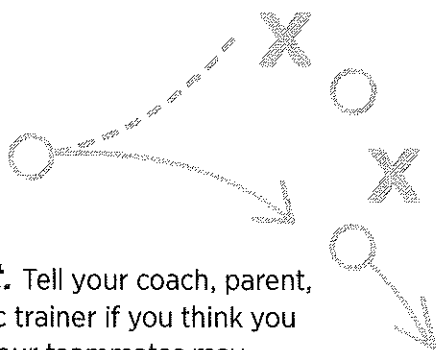
## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works. It can happen when your brain gets bounced around in your skull after a fall or hit to the head.

## What Should I Do If I Think I Have a Concussion?



**Report It.** Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. It's up to you to report your symptoms. Your coach and team are relying on you. Plus, you won't play your best if you are not feeling well.



**Get Checked Out.** If you think you have a concussion, do not return to play on the day of the injury. Only a healthcare provider can tell whether you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to school and play. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.



## **Give Your Brain Time to Heal.**

A concussion can make everyday activities, such as going to school, harder. You may need extra help getting back to your normal activities. Be sure to update your parents and doctor about how you are feeling.

## Why Should I Tell My Coach and Parent About My Symptoms?



- Playing or practicing with a concussion is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery.
- While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. This can put you at risk for a more serious injury to your brain and can even be fatal.

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW:  
IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.



[cdc.gov/HEADSUP](http://cdc.gov/HEADSUP)

# How Can I Tell If I Have a Concussion?

You may have a concussion if you have any of these symptoms after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body:

-  ..... **Get a headache**
-  ..... **Feel dizzy, sluggish, or foggy**
-  ..... **Are bothered by light or noise**
-  ..... **Have double or blurry vision**
-  ..... **Vomit or feel sick to your stomach**
-  ..... **Have trouble focusing or problems remembering**
-  ..... **Feel more emotional or “down”**
-  ..... **Feel confused**
-  ..... **Have problems with sleep**

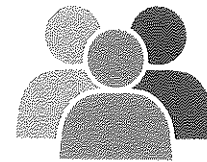
Concussion symptoms usually show up right away, but you might not notice that something “isn’t right” for hours or days. A concussion feels different to each person, so it is important to tell your parents and doctor how you are feeling.

# How Can I Help My Team?



## Protect Your Brain.

Avoid hits to the head and follow the rules for safe and fair play to lower your chances of getting a concussion. Ask your coaches for more tips.



## Be a Team Player.

You play an important role as part of a team. Encourage your teammates to report their symptoms and help them feel comfortable taking the time they need to get better.

The information provided in this document or through linkages to other sites is not a substitute for medical or professional care. Questions about diagnosis and treatment for concussion should be directed to a physician or other healthcare provider.

Revised January 2019

To learn more,  
go to [cdc.gov/HEADSUP](http://cdc.gov/HEADSUP)



# **SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST**

## *A Fact Sheet for Parents*

---

### **FACTS**

Sudden cardiac arrest is a rare, but tragic event that claims the lives of approximately 500 athletes each year in the United States. Sudden cardiac arrest can affect all levels of athletes, in all sports, and in all age levels. 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.

### **WARNING SIGNS**

There may not be any noticeable symptoms before a person experiences loss of consciousness and a 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 my child prevent a sudden cardiac arrest?**

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

- Ensuring your child knows about any family history of sudden cardiac arrest (onset of heart disease in a family member 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
- Asking if your school and the site of competition has an automatic defibrillator (AED) that is close by and properly maintained
- Learning CPR yourself
- Ensuring your child is not using any non-prescribed stimulants or performance enhancing drugs
- Being aware that the inappropriate use of prescription medications or energy drinks can increase risk
- Encouraging your child to be honest and report symptoms of chest discomfort, unusual shortness of breath, racing or irregular heartbeat, or feeling faint

### **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*