

A Fact Sheet for **ATHLETES**

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light
- Bothered by noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.

- **Get a medical check up.** A doctor or health care professional can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

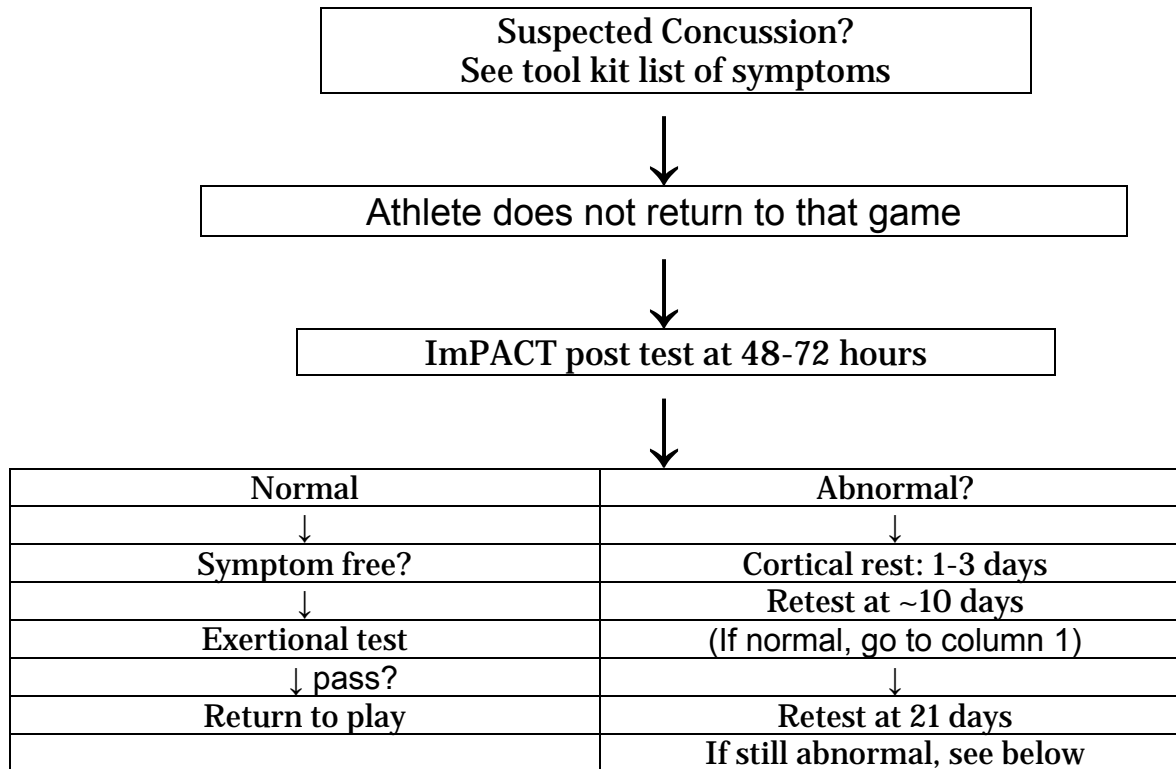
Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
 - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
 - Worn correctly and fit well
 - Used every time you play

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

Academy of the Holy Cross Athletics

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury/Concussion Protocol



Cortical rest

All students with a concussion and documented abnormal ImPACT results would benefit from several days of cortical rest. Cortical rest is achieved by staying home from school and resting. TV, Ipods, video games, etc. are strictly off limits. Sleep, quiet rest, quiet reading, etc. allow the brain to rest and shorten the overall duration of symptoms significantly. The athlete may return to school after a few days when the symptoms are significantly improved.

Abnormal test results

Abnormal ImPACT test scores indicate that a concussion has occurred. Follow up testing should be performed every week or two until normal.

Symptoms last beyond 3 weeks: Athletes with symptoms that last beyond 3 weeks may benefit from other forms of treatment (medications, physical therapy, etc.). We recommend that the athlete be evaluated at Children's Hospital. Children's has a concussion management program call SCORE. Call 202-476-2429 and ask to make an appointment at the SCORE clinic. Be sure you bring copies of your ImPACT score results to your appointment.