



# JOHN STARK REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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## Concussion Information For Parents & Athletes

### What is a Concussion?

Concussions are a type of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), resulting from a blow or jolt to the head or body that temporarily disrupts the normal function of the brain. Concussions range from mild to severe depending on the severity and the length of the symptoms.

### Quick Facts

- Most concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness
- You can sustain a concussion even if you do not hit your head
- A blow elsewhere on the body can transmit an “impulsive” force to the brain and cause a concussion
- A clear CT /CAT scan or MRI does not rule out a concussion.

### What are the signs and symptoms?

Signs and symptoms may be subtle and are not always obvious. They may show up immediately after the injury; or they may show up minutes, hours, or days after the injury. If an athlete reports to you with symptoms, or if you observe any of these signs, seek immediate medical attention. If signs/symptoms are severe and/or are becoming worse call 911.

#### Signs Observed by Others

- Appears dazed/stunned or a vacant stare
- Is confused about assignments/Forgets plays
- Is unsure of date or where they are
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to or after the hit

#### Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache
- Nausea/vomiting
- Visual problems
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Ringing in ears
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish or foggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Sleep disturbances

### What can be done to prevent a concussion?

Equipment may help prevent or reduce the chances of a concussion; however it does not guarantee that an athlete will NEVER sustain a concussion. Unfortunately, there is no piece of equipment or method that is 100% effective in preventing a concussion.

### *What should a student-athlete do if they think they have a concussion?*

**Report it** - to your athletic trainer, coach, school nurse, or parent.

**Rest.** Cognitive rest is just as important as physical rest to recover from a concussion. Reading, texting, watching TV, and playing video games can slow your recovery. Stay home from school until all symptoms have resolved. Academic accommodations can be given as per doctor's note.

**Take time to recover.** If you have a concussion your brain needs time to heal. Be honest with symptoms.

### Risks of Playing with a Concussion

Regardless of the severity, a concussion is an injury that must be taken seriously. The risk of returning to play too early may result in:

**Post Concussion Syndrome:** a neurologic disorder in which the signs and symptoms of the concussion, such as headaches, dizziness, or difficulty concentrating persists for weeks, months, or even years. Researchers have found no proven correlation between the severity of the injury and the development of post- concussion syndrome.

**Second Impact Syndrome:** a life-threatening neurologic disorder, which can lead to severe impairment and even death. Second Impact Syndrome can occur when an athlete sustains another blow to the head while the athlete is still symptomatic of a concussion.

This information is not intended to be, and should not be used as a substitute for appropriate medical care.



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## What to expect if you have a concussion during the season

You will take a follow-up concussion test within 24-72 hours of injury.

The school nurse and the Athletic Trainer will closely monitor your symptoms during and after school, respectively. You must report to them every school day.

You will be withheld from all physical activity including sports and gym classes.

As needed, accommodations (e.g., shorter classes, lighter homework) will be made to help you get back to school. Guidance counselors and teachers, among others, may be involved in this process. If you have trouble concentrating be sure to let people know.

You must have written medical clearance as described below, be asymptomatic both at rest and during activity, and have returned to full school activities to start the return to play program.

- In cases where you have been treated and monitored solely by the Athletic Trainer, clearance from the Athletic Trainer will be acceptable.
- In cases where you have seen a physician or other provider for the concussion, you must have written clearance from primary care physician or specialist (not the Emergency Room physician) for progression to activity.

Progression is individualized, and will be determined on a case by case basis. Factors that may affect the rate of progression include: previous history of concussion, duration and type of symptoms, age, and sport/activity in which you participate. An athlete with a prior history of concussion, one who has had an extended duration of symptoms, or one who is participating in a collision or contact sport will be progressed more slowly.

In the case of a disagreement between medical professionals that cannot be resolved by discussion between them, the more conservative opinion will take precedence.

After the clinical exam and concussion test results have returned to baseline levels, you have resumed full school activities, and you have appropriate medical clearance you will begin a supervised return to play progression. Generally, you will not be progressed faster than one step per day.

1. Light aerobic exercise – walking, stationary bike
2. Light Running
3. Non-contact training drills
4. Full-contact training after medical clearance
5. Game play

Note: If you experience post-concussion symptoms during any phase, you should drop back to the previous asymptomatic level and resume the progression after 24 hours.

The Athletic Trainer will decide appropriate activities for the day and explain what you are allowed to do on any given day during recovery. For your safety, you must stick to what the Athletic Trainer decides you are allowed to do until you receive full return to sports clearance.