

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING
CONCUSSIONS AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

1. *What is a traumatic brain injury or TBI?*

A TBI is an open or closed injury to the head that can cause 1) swelling in the brain, 2) bleeding in the brain, and /or 3) a lack of oxygen delivery to parts of the brain. These conditions may result in temporary or permanent damage to the brain.

2. *What is a concussion?*

A concussion is usually classified as a mild traumatic brain injury. A concussion refers to an injury that changes how the brain normally functions. This change could be as little as ringing in the ears or as serious as loss of consciousness. No matter how insignificant some signs and symptoms may appear, the importance of recognition and proper treatment of these athletes is essential.

3. *What is Second Impact Syndrome?*

Second Impact Syndrome results from an athlete returning to play prior to the signs and symptoms of the initial concussion subsiding. This places the athlete at greater risk of sustaining a second and more severe concussion because the effects of the two concussions are cumulative. The impact needed for this second concussion is much less and the consequences can be fatal.

4. *What is Post Concussion Syndrome?*

Post Concussion Syndrome is a complex disorder in which a combination of post-concussion symptoms such as headaches and dizziness last for weeks and sometimes months after the injury. The severity of the initial injury shows no direct correlation to the duration of the signs and symptoms. The importance is that athletes follow strict *Return to Play Guidelines* to ensure safe participation and decrease the possibility of second impact syndrome.

5. *Interscholastic Sports and TBI / Concussions*

You cannot see a concussion like you can other athletic injuries. This makes it very difficult for individuals to determine if an athlete has sustained a head injury. All individuals who care for student athletes need to be aware of common signs and symptoms associated with head injuries and be ready to act accordingly to provide proper care and ensure safe participation in sports.

6. *TUSD's Physician Referral Checklist / Head Injury Home Care Sheet*

This checklist and home care information will be provided to the parent of each athlete who experiences a head injury. See JJIB-E-2. This document will alert the parent/guardian to watch for certain signs and symptoms that may require medical attention.

7. *Return to Play Guidelines*

Return to play status will vary according to each individual. In accordance with the National Federation of High Schools ruling, an athlete who has been removed from participation due to a suspected concussion will be evaluated by a Certified Athletic Trainer to determine if the athlete sustained a concussion. The athlete may be allowed to return to play only if the Certified Athletic Trainer determines the player did NOT sustain a concussion. If a Certified Athletic Trainer is not available, the athlete will not be permitted to return to play until evaluated by proper medical personnel. If an athlete is believed to have sustained a concussion by either the Athletic Trainer or the Coach, the athlete will be disqualified for the remainder of that day. The NCAA concussion guidelines, adopted by TUSD, read in part, "It is essential that no athlete be allowed to return to participation when any symptoms, including mild headache, persist. It has also been recommended that for any injury that involves significant symptoms, long duration of symptoms or difficulties with memory function not be allowed to return to play during the same day of competition. It has been further demonstrated that retrograde amnesia, post-traumatic amnesia and the duration of confusion and mental status changes longer than 5 minutes may be more sensitive indicators of injury severity. Once the athlete is completely asymptomatic, the return to play progression should occur in a stepwise fashion with gradual increments in physical exertion and risk of contact."

Return to play progression will include resolution of all signs and symptoms and reassessment and attainment of acceptable score on ImPact neurocognitive test. If the athlete was referred to or was evaluated by a physician, a release note is required prior to beginning the progression. The progression back into sport participation will take place in the following order:

- Step 1, Day 1: sign and symptom free at rest for a minimum of 24 hours post injury
- Step 2, Day 2: sign and symptom free with exertion (biking, jogging, etc.)
- Step 3, Day 2: sign and symptom free with sport specific activity non-contact
- Step 4, Day 3: sign and symptom free with sport specific activity contact
- Step 5, Day 4: Full participation

An athlete may not progress to the next step until completion of the previous step. If sign and/or symptom occur, the athlete must return to the first step of the progression.