

## Concussion Awareness

The Middlesex YMCA is committed to providing a safe environment for its players. To help ensure the safety of our players the Y has developed this Concussion Awareness web page. The page is based on the latest concussion guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC")

**The purpose of the Concussion Awareness page is to help educate coaches, players, and parents about concussions. The YMCA does not provide medical advice. The information, including but not limited to text, graphics, images and other material on this page is strictly for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding concussion treatment.**

**What is a concussion?** "A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a bump or blow to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a "ding", "getting your bell rung", or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussion can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goal post."

**How to recognize a possible concussion?** To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your players:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
2. Any change in the player's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. Below is a list of signs and symptoms:

Signs Observed By The Coaching Staff	Symptoms Reported By The Player
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appears dazed or stunned</li><li>• Is confused about assignment or position</li><li>• Forgets sports play</li><li>• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent</li><li>• Moves clumsily</li><li>• Answers questions slowly</li><li>• Loses consciousness (even briefly)</li><li>• Shows behavior or personality changes</li><li>• Can't recall events prior to the hit or fall</li><li>• Can't recall events after the hit or fall</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache or "pressure" in the head</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li><li>• Double or blurry vision</li><li>• Sensitivity to light</li><li>• Sensitivity to noise</li><li>• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concentration or memory problems</li></ul></li><li>• Confusion</li><li>• Does not "feel right"</li></ul>

**Facts for Coaches:** What should a coach do when a concussion is suspected:

1. Remove the athlete from play
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional with experience in evaluating concussions
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussions
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury. Do not return the athlete to play or practice until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating/managing concussion, has cleared them to do so in writing.

Additional information for coaches can be found in the [Fact Sheet for Coaches](#). The CSC also recommends that coaches print out and carry with them one page [Resource for Coaches](#).

**Facts for Players:** Below are concussion facts for players:

What Is A Concussion?	What Should I Do If I Have A Concussion?
<p>A concussion is a brain injury that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is caused by a bump or blow to the head</li> <li>• Can change the way your brain normally works</li> <li>• Can occur during practices or games in any sport</li> <li>• Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out</li> <li>• Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your coaches, parents, and athletic trainer. 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.</li> <li>• Get a medical check up. A doctor or health care professional with knowledge of concussion management can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are ok to return to play.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
What Are The Symptoms Of A Concussion?	How Can I Prevent A Concussion?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headache or "pressure" in the head</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li> <li>• Double or blurry vision</li> <li>• Bothered by light</li> <li>• Bothered by noise</li> <li>• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy</li> <li>• Difficulty paying attention</li> <li>• Memory problems</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Does not "feel right"</li> </ul>	<p>Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself for soccer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.</li> <li>• Practice good sportsmanship at all times.</li> </ul>

Additional information for players can be found in the [Fact Sheet for Athletes](#).

**Facts for Parents:** Below are concussion facts for parents:

What Is A Concussion?	How Can You Help Your Child Prevent A Concussion?
<p>A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a "ding", or "getting your bell rung," or what</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every sport is different, but there are steps</li> </ul>

<p>seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.</p> <p>You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.</p>	<p>your children can take to protect themselves from a concussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.</li> <li>• Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>What Are The Signs And Symptoms Of A Concussion?</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>What Should You Do if You Think Your Child Has A Concussion?</b></p>
<p>Signs observed by parents or guardians. If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appear to be dazed or stunned</li> <li>• Is confused about assignment or position</li> <li>• Forgets an instruction</li> <li>• Is unsure of game, score, or position</li> <li>• Moves clumsily</li> <li>• Answers question slowly</li> <li>• Loses consciousness (even briefly)</li> <li>• Shows behavior or personality changes</li> <li>• Can't recall events prior to hit or fall</li> <li>• Can't recall events after hit or fall</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Seek medical attention right away.</b> A health care professional with knowledge in concussion management will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.</li> <li>2. <b>Keep your child out of play.</b> Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play on the same day the injury occurred and until a health care professional says it is OK. Children who return to play too soon - while the brain is still healing, risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.</li> <li>3. <b>Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion.</b> Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child had in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.</li> </ol>
<p align="center"><b>Symptoms Reported By Player</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headache or "pressure" in the head</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li> <li>• Double or blurry vision</li> <li>• Bothered by light</li> <li>• Bothered by noise</li> <li>• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy</li> <li>• Difficulty paying attention</li> <li>• Memory problems</li> <li>• Confusion</li> </ul>	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does not "feel right"</li></ul> |  |
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Additional information for parents can be found in the [Fact Sheet for Parents](#).

**Return to Play Protocols (Progression) for Health Care Professionals.** There are five gradual steps to help safely return an athlete to play, adapted from the [International Concussion Consensus Guidelines](#). The CSC is including the Return to Play Protocols because we feel it is important that coaches, players, parents and health care professionals know the protocols.

**Baseline (Step 0):** As the baseline step of the Return to Play Progression, the athlete needs to have completed physical and cognitive rest and not be experiencing concussion symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours. *Keep in mind, the younger the athlete, the more conservative the treatment.*

**Step 1: Light Aerobic Exercise**

The Goal: only to increase an athlete's heart rate.

The Time: 5 to 10 minutes.

The Activities: exercise bike, walking, or light jogging.

Absolutely no weight lifting, jumping or hard running.

**Step 2: Moderate Exercise**

The Goal: limited body and head movement.

The Time: Reduced from typical routine

The Activities: moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, and moderate-intensity weightlifting

**Step 3: Non-contact Exercise**

The Goal: more intense but non-contact

The Time: Close to Typical Routine

The Activities: running, high-intensity stationary biking, the player's regular weightlifting routine, and non-contact sport-specific drills. This stage may add some cognitive component to practice in addition to the aerobic and movement components introduced in Steps 1 and 2.

**Step 4: Practice**

The Goal: Reintegrate in full contact practice.

**Step 5: Play**

The Goal: Return to competition

**Online Concussion Training:** For additional information regarding concussion, the CDC has developed a free online concussion training course "Heads Up: Concussions in Youth Sports" that is available to coaches, parents, and others helping to keep athletes safe from concussion. It features interviews with leading experts, dynamic graphics and interactive exercises, and compelling storytelling to help you recognize a concussion and know how to respond if you think that your athlete might have a concussion.