CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR ATHletes

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?
A CONCUSSION IS A TYPE OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY CAUSED BY A FORCE TO THE HEAD OR BODY THAT LEADS TO A CHANGE IN BRAIN FUNCTION. IT IS NOT TYPICALLY ACCOMPANIED BY LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

HOW CAN I KEEP MYSELF SAFE?

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS
You may experience...
- Headache or head pressure
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy or foggy
- Confusion, concentration or memory problems

SPEAK UP
- If you think you have a concussion, stop playing and talk to your coach, athletic trainer or team physician immediately.

TAKE TIME TO RECOVER
- Follow your team physician and athletic trainer’s directions during concussion recovery. If left unmanaged, you may take longer to recover and there could be serious consequences.
- If you’ve had multiple concussions, talk with your physician about the risks and benefits of continuing to participate in your sport.

HEAR THEIR STORIES
Watch videos of student-athletes and their families share their experiences and frustrations caused by a concussion.

NO TWO CONCUSSIONS ARE THE SAME. NEW SYMPTOMS CAN APPEAR HOURS OR DAYS AFTER THE INITIAL IMPACT. IF YOU ARE UNSURE IF YOU HAVE A CONCUSSION, TALK TO YOUR ATHLETIC TRAINER OR TEAM PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY.

AMONGST HAWAII HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES...

9 out of 10 would report their concussion to a parent or family member
3 out of 4 would report their concussion to a coach
3 out of 4 would report their concussion to an athletic trainer

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET A CONCUSSION AND KEEP PRACTICING OR COMPETING?
- Due to brain vulnerability after a concussion, you may be more likely to suffer another concussion while symptomatic from the first one.
- Repeat head trauma can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage or even death.
- Continuing to play after a concussion increases your chances of sustaining other musculoskeletal injuries too.
- Athletes with concussions have reduced concentration and slowed reaction time. This means that you won’t be performing at your best.
- Athletes who delay reporting concussions take longer to recover.

WHAT ARE THE LONG TERM EFFECTS OF A CONCUSSION?
- We don’t fully understand the long term effects of a concussion, but ongoing studies raise concerns.
- Athletes who have had multiple concussions may have an increased risk of degenerative brain disease and cognitive and emotional difficulties later in life.

HOW CAN I BE A GOOD TEAMMATE?

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS
You may notice that a teammate...
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Forgets an instruction
- Is confused about an assignment or position
- Appears less coordinated
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness

ENCOURAGE TEAMMATES TO BE SAFE
- If you think one of your teammates has a concussion, tell your coach, athletic trainer or team physician immediately.
- Help create a culture of safety by encouraging your teammates to report any concussion symptoms.

SUPPORT YOUR INJURED TEAMMATE
- If one of your teammates has a concussion, let him or her know you and your team support playing it safe and following medical advice during recovery.
- Being unable to practice or join team activities can be isolating. Make sure your teammates know they are not alone.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT REPETITIVE HEAD IMPACTS?
- Repetitive head impacts mean that an individual has been exposed to repeated impacts to the head. These forces may or may not cause a concussion to occur.
- Research is ongoing but emerging data suggests that repetitive head impacts may be harmful and place a student athlete at an increased risk of neurological complications later in life.

DID YOU KNOW?
- Concussions can happen anywhere and at any time. In fact, the most common cause of concussions are slips and falls.
- Although symptoms may affect daily living at first, with treatment you will get better during the first few days after a concussion.
- The brain recovers during sleep - getting 8 to 10 hours of constant sleep is very important.
- We are learning more about concussions every day. To learn more about concussions, visit https://hawaiiconcussion.com.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Get Schooled on Concussions
https://www.getschooledonconcussions.com
HEADS UP to Youth Sports
https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports

Hawaii state law requires that all student athletes complete a concussion education course.
Get certified at: https://hcamp.info/sa