

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.



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**.

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.



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.

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

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://hawaii concussion.com>.

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.



Hawaii state law requires that all student athletes complete a concussion education course.

Get certified at:
<https://hcamp.info/sa>



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Get Schooled on Concussions
<https://www.getschooledonconcussions.com>

HEADS UP to Youth Sports
<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports>