CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

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.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

REPORTABLE SYMPTOMS
Symptoms your child may tell you they are experiencing.
- Headache or head pressure
- Nausea or sick to stomach
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Neck or back pain
- Confusion, concentration or memory problems
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy or foggy
- Dizziness or seeing stars
- Low energy, sleepy or tired
- Trouble falling asleep
- Waking up throughout the night

OBSERVABLE SIGNS
Signs you may see in your child.
- Dazed or stunned; looks to have “glassy eyes”
- Confusion or disorientation
- Vomiting
- Loss of balance or clumsiness
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty paying attention
- Loss of consciousness
- More emotional (angry, sad, irritable)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

DAILY REGULATION OF ACTIVITY TO RECOVERY
During a concussion, it is important to schedule or regulate daily routines to aid in recovery. Proper sleep, hygiene, nutrition, and hydration has been shown to improve concussion symptoms and recovery.
- Sleep - A constant 8-10 hours of sleep is better than frequent napping. Setup a bedtime and a wake-up time.
- Nutrition/diet - Eat a well-balanced diet and don’t skip a meal. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, providing energy that is needed for your brain.
- Hydration - Since your brain is 80% water, it is important to keep it hydrated to aid in recovery. Drinking at least half your body weight in ounces per day is recommended.
- Monitored Physical activity - Very light exercise may be helpful as long as symptoms are not triggered. Consult with your health care provider.

COGNITIVE PACING & RETURN TO DAILY LIVING
- During the first 2-3 days after a concussion, it is recommended to rest (limit cognitive activity).
- After 2-3 days, an individual should return to a normal daily routine, such as screen time, reading, etc.
- Rule of thumb: If symptoms worsen or are provoked, stop activity and rest for a short period then begin activity again.
- If symptoms still reoccur, stop activity for the day and try again later.
- It is important to return back to school as soon as possible. Work with the concussion management team on school reintegration.

IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM PLAY
Hawaii Concussion Law (Act 262) is directed toward the 11-18 year old population. The law mandates if a concussion is suspected, that individual must be removed from play immediately and evaluated by a medical professional trained in sport concussion management. That individual cannot return to play until a written medical clearance is obtained.

Continuing to play with a concussion is dangerous for young athletes because of the following:
- Second Impact Syndrome - Occurs when another concussion is sustained before a prior concussion is resolved. This causes rapid and severe brain swelling which results in permanent brain damage and/or death.
- Longer, more complicated recovery time - Average time to recover is longer and athletes have more difficulty in classroom and display more emotional changes.
- Increased risk of suffering another concussion - Rate of risk rises exponentially. A lesser amount of impact force is needed to sustain another concussion.
- Decreased athletic performance - Affects vision, reaction, balance and coordination. Greater risk of sustaining musculoskeletal injuries while playing with a concussion.

GRADUAL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL
Before returning to any kind of physical activity, the following should be done:
- Obtain written medical clearance from a medical professional trained in concussion management.
- You child should be symptom free for at least 24-48 hours.
- Your child should be in school full time without any academic adjustments and is not experiencing symptoms while in school.
- Have your child progress through the Gradual Return to Play Protocol before participating without limitations.

The symptom checklist can be used to monitor your child’s symptoms. It can be used immediately after a concussion as well as for periodic monitoring. The checklist provides valuable information for the physician during appointments.

Sport-specific Gradual Return to Play Protocols as well as a copy of the symptom checklist are available for download by visiting https://hawaiiconcussion.com/resources.

Steps three through seven are each separated by 24 hours, and monitored by the athletic trainer (ATC). Concussion symptoms affect an individual’s physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing. A concussion can also affect an individual’s sleep pattern. The most common symptoms reported immediately after a concussion are headache and dizziness.

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TAKING CONCUSSIONS SERIOUSLY. YOUR CHILD’S FUTURE SHOULD BE A PRIORITY. IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD COULD HAVE A CONCUSSION, HAVE THEM SEE AN ATHLETIC TRAINER OR TEAM PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Get Schooled on Concussions
https://www.getschooledonconcussions.com

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

HCAMP FOR PARENTS
Parents/guardians with children between 11-18 years old are required to complete a concussion education course.

Take the course now at: https://hcamp.info/parents

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