



# Valley Jewish Community Center Concussion Management Plan

A Guide for Parents, Coaches, Youth and Adults

Updated February 9, 2022

## **Concussions in Youth**

Youth sports are a place where we encourage young people to push themselves. And that can mean taking minor injuries or concussions too lightly. The more we learn about concussions in youth sports, the more we recognize that they can have long-term affects like memory loss or personality changes. Youth athletes are at a heightened risk and may require more time to recover compared to an adult. The risks only multiply if children are subjected to multiple concussions over time.

For this reason, it's important to create an organizational culture that takes concussions seriously both in youth and adults. The information contained in this plan can be used as a guide for prevention, detection, and response, and help to change the way sport-related concussions impact youth and adults in our community. While this plan focuses more on the youth athlete, adults and adult athletes should act in accordance with the following information.

### **What is a concussion?**

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells.

### **What is a subconcussive head impact?**

A subconcussive head impact is a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that does not cause symptoms. This differs from concussions, which do cause symptoms. A collision while playing sports is one way a person can get a subconcussive head impact. Studies are ongoing to learn about subconcussive head impacts and how these impacts may or may not affect the brain of young athletes.

### **How to keep athletes safe?**

Your actions can help lower an athlete's chances of getting a concussion or other serious injury. Aggressive or unsportsmanlike behavior among athletes can increase their chances of getting a concussion or other serious injury. Here are some ways you can help:

#### **Talk with athletes about concussion:**

- Set time aside throughout the season to talk about concussion.
- Ask athletes about any concerns they have about reporting concussion symptoms.
- Remind athletes that safety comes first and that you expect them to tell you and their parent(s) if they think they have experienced a bump, blow, or jolt to their head and "don't feel right."

### **Focus on safety at games and practices:**

- Teach athletes ways to lower the chances of getting a hit to the head.
- Enforce rules that limit or remove the risk of head impacts.
- Tell athletes that good sportsmanship is expected at all times, both on and off the field.
- Bring emergency contact information for parents and healthcare providers to each game and practice in case an athlete needs to be seen right away for a concussion or other serious injury.

### **Prevention**

Even when youth are following the rules and wearing the proper protective gear, an injury free game is not guaranteed. Therefore, we rely on Return to Play laws. They were first developed in 2009 after a 13-year-old football player received a concussion but was allowed to return to play 15 minutes later. This resulted in a traumatic brain injury that left him in a coma for nine months. Since this incident, all 50 states have adopted some form of Return to Play law.

State laws vary greatly with both the types of organizations and activities that are covered, and the requirements you must meet to comply. Regardless of what state you're in, most Return to Play laws require:

1. Training and education for coaches on recognizing concussion symptoms and responding appropriately
2. Education for parents and athletes
3. Protocol for removing an athlete suspected of head injury from play
4. Medical clearance by a trained healthcare professional in order to return to play

The CDC provides an online training at no cost and guides—[HEADS UP to Youth Sports](#)—that focuses on concussion awareness, recognition and prevention. It's important to be aware that concussion statutes generally apply to all youth sports, not just those that are perceived as high risk, such as tackle football and ice hockey. The statutes even apply to “non-contact” sports such as swimming and gymnastics.

### **How can I spot a possible concussion?**

Athletes who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or who simply say they just “don't feel right”—after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion or other serious brain injury. Concussion signs and symptoms often show up soon after the injury, but it can be hard to tell how serious the concussion is at first. Some symptoms may not show up for hours or days.

Making sure that coaches, parents, and the youth themselves know what signs to look for, and feel empowered to report symptoms, is one of the most important steps you can take to make sure, concussions are properly detected. Because it could take hours and even days for signs to surface, the following symptoms should be closely monitored for at least a week following an injury:

### **Observed Symptoms**

- Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall
- Appears dazed or stunned, answers questions slowly
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

### **Reported Symptoms**

- Headache or "pressure" in head, can be persistent or severe
- Nausea or vomiting
- Poor balance or dizziness, or double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy, sleepy
- Confusion, concentration, or memory problems
- Irritability, mild depression, ringing in the ears
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down"

### **Appropriate Response**

A concussion, or the damage caused by a concussion, is not something that should be diagnosed by anyone other than a healthcare professional. When in doubt, sit players out for the remainder of the day, or at least until they have been cleared by a specialist. Although there isn't much that anyone except a medical professional can do to help the injured player, you can help the diagnosis process by reporting the following to a medical professional:

1. A description of the how the injury was inflicted, and where the physical impact occurred
2. Any loss of consciousness and length of time the player was unconscious
3. Any memory loss, confusion, or seizures right after the injury

## Back in the Swing of Things

When you have a player who has had a diagnosed concussion and has been evaluated and cleared by a medical professional, returning to play can be scary for everyone. Be sure to monitor things like changes in attention, processing speed and reaction time. But gradual reintegration is possible, and we recommend taking the following steps:

1. First, allow the player to engage in light, non-physical activities like reading or board games. Not only will this minimize the risk of further exacerbation of the injury, but it will give you the opportunity to monitor their behavior and cognitive ability.
2. Then, allow the player to engage in moderately physical activities that involve very minimal physical contact.
3. Once you see that the child can handle physical activity, without becoming weak, dizzy, or otherwise affected, you can allow him or her to return to playing contact/competitive sports.

## Concussions in Adults

What about Adults? While youth may get injured and suffer from a concussion, adults, employees, coaches, time/scorekeepers, officials/referees, and volunteers may also injure themselves. This injury can cause a concussion.

If you notice the following signs in employees, coaches, time/scorekeepers, officials/referees, and volunteers after being injured, it may be the cause of a concussion:

- Confusion or feeling dazed
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sensitivity to light
- Concentration difficulty
- Headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Slurred speech

If you notice any of these symptoms in employees, coaches, time/scorekeepers, officials/referees, and/or volunteers, encourage them to seek medical attention.

## Concussion Myths

Concussions are not always what we think they are, and they affect us all differently. Here are common misconceptions about concussions and the facts that disprove them:

**Myth:** A concussion can only result from a direct blow to the head.

**Fact:** A concussion can be caused by a direct blow to the head, or a blow to the face, neck, or anywhere else in the body that transmits the impact to the head.

**Myth:** Only players who participate in more aggressive contact sports like football suffer from concussions.

**Fact:** While football has the highest number of concussions, all sports have the potential to put children at risk for concussions.

**Myth:** Proper use of helmets will guarantee concussion-prevention.

**Fact:** The results are conflicting, and although helmets do help to prevent concussions, impact to the brain is still possible and should not be discounted.

### Checklists for Warning Signs & Symptoms of Concussions

Coaches and athletic trainers may first notice that the child:

- |  |  |   |                                      |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> appears dazed   | <input type="checkbox"/> forgets plays       | <input type="checkbox"/> loses balance    | <input type="checkbox"/> is confused |
| <input type="checkbox"/> moves awkwardly | <input type="checkbox"/> loses consciousness | <input type="checkbox"/> appearing groggy |                                      |

### Early Signs of a Concussion

Examine the child for early signs of concussion after taking them out of a game or practice:

- |                                    |                                   |  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> confusion | <input type="checkbox"/> headache | <input type="checkbox"/> vomiting        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dizziness | <input type="checkbox"/> nausea   | <input type="checkbox"/> lightheadedness |

### Late Signs of a Concussion

The child should be monitored for later signs after returning home and going back to school:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> persistent headache | <input type="checkbox"/> irritability   | <input type="checkbox"/> ringing in the ears |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lightheadedness     | <input type="checkbox"/> blurred vision | <input type="checkbox"/> poor attention      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> restlessness        | <input type="checkbox"/> depressed mood | <input type="checkbox"/> memory problems     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fatigue or anxiety  |   |  |

### Resources

- [CDC's Sports Concussions Policies & Laws](#)

## CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Valley Jewish Community Center Acknowledgement of Concussion Management Plan

I \_\_\_\_\_, have read, understand, and agree with the Valley Jewish Community Center safety guidelines and precautions regarding concussions, and will abide by them while serving as a staff-member, coach and/or volunteer.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name if Participant is Under the Age of 18: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature (Parent if Under 18)                      Name (Printed)                      Date