

Westhill Central Schools
Return to Participation in Athletic Activity Protocol
Following a Concussion

The following protocol has been established in accordance to the National Federation of State High School Associations and the International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Prague 2004.

When an athlete shows **ANY** signs or symptoms of a concussion:

1. The athlete will not be allowed to return to play in current or future games, practices or participate in other athletic activities until cleared by the Licensed Treating Physician and the School District's Medical Director/Team Physician (also referred to in law and district policy as the district's "Director of School Health Services").
2. The athlete should not be left alone, and regular monitoring for deterioration is essential over the initial few hours following injury.
3. **The athlete must be medically evaluated following the injury.**
4. Return to participation in athletic activity must follow a medically supervised stepwise process.

The cornerstone of proper concussion management is rest until all symptoms resolve and then a graded program of exertion before return to participation in athletic activity. The program is broken down into six steps in which only one step is covered a day. The six steps involve the following:

1. No exertional activity until asymptomatic for at least 24 hours
2. Light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary bike, etc. No resistance training.
3. Sport specific exercise such as skating, running, etc. Progressive addition of resistance training may begin
4. Non-contact training/skill drills
5. Full contact training in practice setting
6. Return to competition

If any concussion symptoms recur, the athlete should drop back to the previous level and try to progress after 24 hours of rest.

The student-athlete should also be monitored for recurrence of symptoms due to mental exertion, such as reading, working on a computer, or taking a test.

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Concussion Management Policy and Guide



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury that:

- Is caused by a blow to the head or body.
 - From contact with another player, hitting a hard surface such as the ground, ice or floor, or being hit by a piece of equipment such as a bat, lacrosse stick or field hockey ball
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can range from mild to severe
- Presents itself differently for each athlete
- Can occur during practice or competition in ANY sport
- **Can happen even if you do not lose consciousness**

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after the injury or can take days or weeks to appear. **If your teen reports any symptoms of a concussion or if you notice the symptoms yourself seek medical attention right away. Concussion symptoms include:**

Dazed or stunned	Headache	Answers questions slowly
Confusion	Nausea/Vomiting	Feeling sluggish
Forgets Plays	Balance problems	Loss of consciousness
Unsure of game score	Double or fuzzy vision	Feeling foggy or groggy
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light or sounds	Behavior or personality changes
Concentration difficulties	Increased fatigue	Irritability
Can't recall events	ringing in ears	Dizziness

Where can I find more information on concussions?

www.cdc.gov/concussions

<http://nysphsaa.org/safety/>

<http://www.upstate.edu/pmr/healthcare/programs/concussion/>

www.westhillschools.org/athletics

What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

Don't hide it. Tell your athletic trainer, coach, school nurse and parents. Never ignore a blow to the head. Also, tell your athletic trainer and coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out.

Report it. Do not return to participation in a game, practice or other activity with symptoms. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to return to play.

Get checked out. Your physician, athletic trainer, or health care professional can tell you if you have had a concussion and when you are cleared to return to play. A concussion can affect your ability to perform everyday activities, your reaction time, balance, sleep and classroom performance.

Take time to recover. 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 repeat concussion. In rare cases, repeat concussions can cause permanent brain damage and even death. Severe brain injury can change your entire life. **Once cleared to resume activity by the physician, you will follow a Return to Athletic Participation Protocol.**

How can I prevent a concussion?

1. Do not initiate contact with your head or helmet. You can still get a concussion if you are wearing a helmet
2. Avoid striking an opponent in the head. Undercutting, flying elbows, stepping on a head, checking an unprotected opponent, and sticks to the head all cause concussions
3. Follow your athletics department's rules for safety and the rules of the sport
4. Practice good sportsmanship at all times
5. Practice and perfect the skills of the sport

“It is better to miss one game than the entire season”