

## CONCUSSION AND RETURN TO PLAY

A concussion is one of the more common injuries suffered by high school athletes, particularly in contact sports like football. A concussion is a brain injury produced by direct or indirect head trauma with one or more of the following:

- Amnesia
- Memory loss
- Difficulty concentrating
- Headache
- Sensitivity to light
- Dizziness / vertigo

Delayed symptoms can include:

- Sleep disturbance
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Feeling slowed down in a fog

Physicians should "over treat" head injuries and keep athletes out of the game if they are "not right," appear to have memory loss or have a headache or nausea while running.

### **Risk for multiple concussions**

Athletes who sustain one concussion have a two to four times greater risk of sustaining another concussion injury. Although rare, "second impact syndrome" can result from second closed head injury. This condition is marked by malignant brain swelling, increased intracranial pressure and cognitive impairment. It is more common among children and young adults.

Athletes who may have sustained a concussion should not be allowed to return to play until they are symptom free.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimated that there were about 358,000 concussion injuries relating to all consumer products in 2001. This does not include concussions suffered in car accidents, boating accidents and other ways not under CPSC jurisdiction. Of those injuries, about 28,000 were related to football in all age categories. About 18,700 were football-related and suffered by people 15-24 years old. About 17,000 were football-related and 15-19 years old.

A consensus statement on Sideline Preparedness for the Team Physician developed by AAOS, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Sports Medicine and several other organizations advises physicians to be conservative in allowing an injured high school athlete to return to play.