

## Concussion Home Care Instructions

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

A concussion is an injury to the brain. It's usually caused by a blow to the head. Most of the time a concussion does not involve a loss of consciousness.

### **What are the signs of a concussion?**

Individuals who have had a concussion will usually experience some of the following signs and symptoms in the minutes, hours, days and weeks after an injury:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Ringing in the ears
- Nausea
- Vision disturbance
- Poor balance
- Memory difficulties
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling "foggy"
- Trouble sleeping
- Oversensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling slowed down
- Fatigue
- Irritability and mood changes

### **How is it diagnosed?**

Suspected concussion injuries should be evaluated both by BHS staff and by your physician. First, if you suspect a concussion, notify the Athletic Trainer and team coach so signs and symptoms can be assessed and recorded. The Athletic Trainer for Brookline High School is Alex Jzyk (office telephone: 617-713-5416 and cellular telephone: 401-487-1320). The Athletic Trainer may also get information from people who were on site when the concussion

happened. This is very important, especially if the athlete is confused or does not remember the injury. The Athletic Trainer will perform initial testing of strength, sensation, balance, reflexes and memory. In more serious cases, you will be referred to a doctor who will want to get special x-rays of your head, called computed tomographic scans (CT) or magnetic resonance images (MRI).

If the Athletic Trainer cannot be reached, call your primary care physician or, go to the nearest emergency department for evaluation. Please have your physician contact the BHS Athletic Trainer, Alex Jzyk for consultation.

### **Does medicine help?**

The treatment for concussion is rest. If you have a headache, try cool applications on your head, such as an iced towel. Always ask your doctor before you take any medicine if you've had a concussion. Aspirin and anti-inflammatory medicines can complicate the injury.

### **What symptoms warrant immediate medical attention?**

- Any loss of consciousness
  - Severe headache
  - Repeated vomiting
  - Confusion that gets worse
  - Difficulty walking, speaking or using your arms
  - Convulsions
  - Unusual sleepiness
  - Stiff neck
- When can I return to sports? You should NEVER return to play while you still have any symptoms or effects of concussion. This is crucial to your safety. Most athletes are ready to return to action in a few weeks but every injury is unique and requires individual management.

**THE TEAM PHYSICIAN IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR CLEARANCE TO RETURN TO SPORTS.**

### **What are the risks of returning to play too early?**

- Causing symptoms to persist weeks or months longer than they would with proper rest
- Development of permanent symptoms or lowered thinking skills
- Catastrophic brain damage

### **Are there any lasting effects to a concussion?**

Most people get better after a concussion without any permanent damage. People can have signs of concussion for weeks to months. After several concussions, your doctors may talk with you about changing sports.

Dear Parent,

Your son or daughter has been identified by Brookline High School (BHS) Athletics' staff as having symptoms of a concussion. Such injuries are common in many sports but should not be minimized. Symptoms may last for hours or for weeks. Please read the opposite side of this sheet.

BHS has in place a comprehensive concussion management program which uses a multidisciplinary approach involving your child's physician; BHS athletic trainer Alex Jzyk, L.A.T.C., BHS team neuropsychologist Neal McGrath, Ph.D. and BHS team physician Laurence Higgins, M.D. This team will be monitoring your child's recovery to determine when it is safe for him or her to return to sports participation.

Young athletes usually show complete recovery from concussions in a relatively short period of time as long as they remain sidelined while still symptomatic and are carefully evaluated so as not to return to action before they are fully recovered. An athlete who returns too soon risks having symptoms unnecessarily prolonged for weeks or months and, in rare cases, can suffer more serious injury. Behavior and academic performance can be affected during the recovery process. Your observations about your child's recovery are important to us.

Please contact Athletic Trainer Alex Jzyk

617-713-5416 (office)

401-487-1320 (cell phone)

[ajzyk@partners.org](mailto:ajzyk@partners.org) (email)

In order to be cleared by our team physician to return to BHS athletic activity, we will want to know that your child's doctor is involved. It is necessary that evaluation by our staff, including ImPACT testing, indicates your child has fully recovered. Please share this information sheet with your child's physician.

Dear Doctor,

Brookline High School has a concussion management program that includes athlete/parent education, baseline testing of contact sports athletes using the ImPACT test battery, formal sideline assessment by the BHS Athletic Trainer and follow-up ImPACT testing during recovery. ImPACT test results are interpreted by Team Neuropsychologist Neal McGrath, Ph.D. Final authority for return to BHS sports participation is by Team Physician Laurence Higgins, M.D.

If you would like a copy of our sports concussion management guidelines or to speak with us about your patient's return to sports action at BHS, please contact Athletic Trainer Alex Jzyk at:

617-713-5416 (office)

401-487-1320 (cell)

[ajzyk@partners.org](mailto:ajzyk@partners.org) (email)