

****North Tonawanda City School District Concussion Information Sheet**

INFORMATION FOR STUDENT—ATHLETES & PARENTS/LEGAL CUSTODIANS

What is a concussion? A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head. It results in your brain not working as it should. It may or may not cause you to black out or pass out. It can happen to you from a fall, a hit to the head, or a hit to the body that causes your head and your brain to move quickly back and forth.

How do I know if I have a concussion? There are many signs and symptoms that you may have following a concussion. A concussion can affect your thinking, the way your body feels, your mood, or your sleep. Here is what to look for:

<i>Thinking/Remembering</i>	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Emotional/Mood</i>	<i>Sleep</i>
Difficulty thinking clearly	Headache	Irritability-things bother you more easily	Sleeping more than usual
Taking longer to figure things out	Fuzzy or blurry vision	Sadness	Sleeping less than
Difficulty concentrating	Feeling sick to your stomach/queasy	Being more moody	Trouble falling asleep
Difficulty remembering new information	Vomiting/throwing up	Feeling nervous or worried	Feeling tired
	Dizziness	Crying more	
	Balance problems		
	Sensitivity to noise or light		

Table is adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/>)

What should I do if I think I have a concussion? If you are having any of the signs or symptoms listed above, you should tell your parents, coach, athletic trainer or school nurse so they can get you the help you need. If a parent notices these symptoms, they should inform the school nurse or athletic trainer.

When should I be particularly concerned? If you have a headache that gets worse over time, you are unable to control your body, you throw up repeatedly or feel more and more sick to your stomach, or your words are coming out funny/slurred, you should let an adult like your parent or coach or teacher know right away, so they can get you the help you need before things get any worse.

What are some of the problems that may affect me after a concussion? You may have trouble in some of your classes at school or even with activities at home. If you continue to play or return to play too early with a concussion, you may have long term trouble remembering things or paying attention, headaches may last a long time, or personality changes can occur once you have a concussion, you are more likely to have another concussion.

The district physician (Wheatfield Pediatrics) must sign off on your return to play.

Source: UNC Matthew Gellar Sport-Related TBI Research Center, North Carolina Medical Society, North Carolina Athletic Trainers' Association, Brain Injury Association of North Carolina, North Carolina Neuropsychological Society and North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

Please contact NTCSD Athletic Trainer, Darren Vukovic, with any questions or concerns at 807-3608.

BASELINE TESTING

During this school year North Tonawanda is beginning to baseline test our student athletes. We have started with the fall sport teams and will continue testing through to the spring seasons. Our goal is to have all student athletes tested before the end of their sport season. Darren Vukovic is in charge of our testing which consists of a 30 minutes computerized question and answer test done in our computer lab.

To help answer some common questions about baseline testing among young athletes, CDC has compiled a list of frequently asked questions to help you.

What is baseline testing?

Baseline testing is a pre-season exam conducted by a trained health care professional. Baseline tests are used to help assess an athlete's balance and brain function (including learning and memory skills, ability to pay attention or concentrate, and how quickly he or she thinks and solve problems), as well for the presence of any concussion symptoms. Results from baseline tests (or pre-injury tests) can be used and compared to a similar exam conducted by a health care professional during the season if an athlete has a suspected concussion. Baseline testing should take place during the pre-season—ideally prior to the first practice. It is important to note that some baseline and concussion assessment tools are only suggested for use among athletes ages 10 years and older.

How is baseline testing information used if an athlete has a suspected concussion?

Results from baseline testing can be used if an athlete has a suspected concussion. Comparing post-injury test results to baseline test results can assist health care professionals in identifying the effects of the injury and making more informed return to school and play decisions. Education should always be provided to athletes and parents if an athlete has a suspected concussion. This should include information on safely returning to school and play, tips to aid in recovery (such as rest), dangers signs and when to seek immediate care, and how to help reduce an athlete's risk for a future concussion. **What should be included as part of baseline testing?** Baseline testing should include a check for concussion symptoms, as well as balance and cognitive (such as concentration and memory) assessments. Computerized or paper-pencil neuropsychological tests may be included as a piece of an overall baseline test to assess an athlete's concentration, memory, and reaction time. During the baseline pre-season test, health care professionals should also assess for a prior history of concussion (including symptoms experienced and length of recovery from the injury). It is also important to record other medical conditions that could impact recovery after concussion, such as a history of migraines, depression, mood disorders, or anxiety, as well as learning disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Baseline testing also provides an important opportunity to educate athletes and others about concussion and return to school and play protocols.

Who should interpret baseline tests?

Only a trained health care professional with experience in concussion management should interpret the results of baseline exam. When possible, ideally a neuropsychologist should interpret the computerized or paper-pencil neuropsychological test components of a baseline exam. Results of neuropsychological tests should not be used as a stand-alone diagnostic tool, but should serve as one component used to make return to school and play decisions.

How often should an athlete undergo baseline testing?

It is recommended that most components of baseline testing be repeated annually to establish a valid test result for *Resources for coaches and parents: visit www.cdc.gov/concussion* comparison. Baseline computerized or paper-pencil neuropsychological tests may be repeated every 2 years. However, more frequent neuropsychological testing may be needed if an athlete has sustained a concussion or if the athlete has a medical condition that could affect results of the test.

Who should administer baseline tests?

Baseline tests should only be conducted by a trained health care professional.

North Tonawanda Concussion Procedure

If your child is suspected of sustaining a head injury while participating on one of our sport programs your child will need to be evaluated by a doctor. It is up to your discretion what doctor you would like your child to be evaluated by (your own family doctor or emergency room doctor). This visit serves as the initial diagnosis. Please make sure you get a note from the doctor stating your child's diagnosis and return this to our athletic trainer – Darren Vukovic at the high school (716-807-3608).

Steps to return your child to play:

After the initial diagnosis of a concussion, the athlete must go through a daily checklist of systems and questions with Darren Vukovic. Once your child is symptom free for 24 hours, he/she will be sent to Wheatfield Pediatrics to be seen by our school's doctor. If your child is cleared to resume physical activity, they will then start a 5-day return to play protocol consisting of different cardiovascular, strength or conditioning activities each day. Wheatfield Pediatrics will be notified when the above protocol has been successfully completed. Notification will then come from Wheatfield Pediatrics to our athletic trainer allowing the return of your child to full activity.

New York State Education Department states that only the school physician (Wheatfield Pediatrics) can clear your child back to participation.

***For more information on concussions go to the website below.

<http://www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury/>

Traumatic Brain Injury Topics

Concussion and Mild TBI

Severe TBI

Concussion in Sports

Clinical Diagnosis and Management

Statistics

Long-term Outcomes

Causes and Risk Groups