

## Student athletes and concussions: Fact sheet

### A guide for parents and caregivers

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head and can be serious. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild hit to the head can be serious. You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms can appear immediately after the injury or sometimes not until days or weeks later. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, it's important to seek medical attention immediately.

#### Signs and symptoms of a concussion:

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head or body during a game or practice, watch to see if the child:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about sports assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of the game score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events before the hit or fall
- Can't recall events after the hit or fall

The student athlete may report additional symptoms:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy feeling
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Doesn't feel "right"



## What to do if your child may have a concussion

- 1. Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional can determine if a concussion occurred, how serious it is and when it's safe for your child to return to sports.
- 2. Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's OK, even if your child insists otherwise. Children who return to play too soon – while the brain is still healing – risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be extremely serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- 3. Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. The coach may not know about a previous concussion, and there could be serious health risks for your child.

Providence is committed to helping young athletes, their families and their coaches prevent, recognize and treat concussions. For more information about the Providence Concussion Management Program, contact Providence Sports Care Center at 503-962-1900 or go to [www.providence.org/rehab](http://www.providence.org/rehab) and click on the "Forms & Information" link.

For detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury, visit [www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion).



## Keeping young athletes in the game

**Providence offers free heart screenings and sports rehabilitation for children and teens.**

### Free youth heart screenings

Chances are that your child's heart is healthy – and yet a small percentage of young people have hidden heart defects that put their lives at risk, especially during physical exertion.

Providence Heart and Vascular Institute offers a painless, noninvasive screening to check the heart health of young people 12 to 18 years of age. The screening includes: Electrocardiogram (EKG) • Heart health questionnaire • Blood pressure reading • Echocardiogram, if needed

An appointment is required; please call 503-216-6800. Two screening locations:

**West Portland** Providence St. Vincent Medical Center

**East Portland** Providence Heart Clinic-Gateway

For information or an appointment, please call 503-216-6800 or visit [www.PlaySmartGetScreened.org](http://www.PlaySmartGetScreened.org).

### Sports medicine

Across from Lincoln High School, Providence Sports Care Center offers state-of-the-art sports medicine and orthopedic rehabilitation services to athletes of all levels. The physicians and staff who treat Portland Timbers and Thorns athletes will care for your child with the same attention and skill.

### Providence Sports Care Center

909 SW 18<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
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503-962-1900

[www.providence.org/rehab](http://www.providence.org/rehab)

