



In December 2011, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania passed the Safety in Youth Sports Act that establishes “standards for managing concussions and traumatic brain injuries for student athletes.” This Act will be effective as of July 1, 2012. Our protocol at Cambria Heights High School is designed to follow these legislative guidelines and outline the procedures following an injury to an athlete’s brain. These procedures are to help insure that injured athletes are identified, treated appropriately by an appropriate medical professional, and are fully recovered prior to returning to play.

There are common signs and symptoms that help us recognize a concussion. To see a complete list of these signs and symptoms, please refer to the Take Home Instruction Sheet. If your child is experiencing any signs or symptoms after a head injury then he/she should remain home from school until he/she is symptom free.

After your child has been diagnosed with a concussion, we will notify the school nurse and your child’s PE teacher as concussed athletes should not be participating in activities that have a high level of mental or physical exertion associated with them. After your child sees a physician, he/she should bring in a note that reiterates that the child should not participate in gym, as well as any other restrictions the physician may provide. If your child requires any academic accommodations from his/her physician, he/she should bring this paperwork to either his/her guidance counselor or the school nurse.

When an athlete suffers from a head injury, we take them through a series of neurocognitive tests. A SCAT5 test can be performed immediately after the injury on the sideline or in the Athletic Training Room. The SCAT5 tests for general cognitive function, such as memory, orientation, and balance, and also offers a standardized symptom evaluation that we can continue to utilize through your child’s treatment. We like to continue to run concussed athletes through the SCAT5 symptom evaluation every day so that we have an objective score to see if symptoms have improved or not. If the athlete isn’t able to come in every day, then we will test his/her symptoms on the days he/she is able to report to the Athletic Training Room.

We also utilize ImPACT testing. ImPACT is a computerized assessment that is utilized as a tool to evaluate neurocognitive function recovery after a concussion. These functions include memory, attention, brain processing speed, reaction time and post-concussion symptoms. At the beginning of each season, we require all new athletes participating in moderate to high risk sports to take a baseline ImPACT test. Ideally, after an athlete is concussed, we would like to do post injury testing within 24-72 hours of the initial injury. Please contact the Athletic Trainer to set up a time for your child to take his/her Post-Injury ImPACT test. After the first Post-Injury test, we will repeat these tests at the appropriate intervals. These neurocognitive test results are extremely helpful for your physician so we recommend bringing them to your

appointment. ImPACT is **NOT** a test that will diagnose a concussion, but rather a tool used in the evaluation of concussions and the management of concussion recovery.

In accordance with the Safety in Youth Sports Act, we have created a referral sheet listing specific Primary Care Physicians and Specialists that are specifically “trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.” Athletes must see a physician from this list in order to be cleared to return to play.

## **Return to Play Procedures**

If an athlete exhibits any signs or symptoms of a concussion or has any abnormal cognitive testing, he/she will **NOT** be permitted to return to play on the same day of the injury.

In order to progress back into activity after a concussion, a concussed athlete must meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- Asymptomatic at rest
- Asymptomatic with mental exertion
- Within normal range of baseline on Post-Injury ImPACT testing
- Have written clearance from a physician trained in the evaluation and management of concussions

When all of the above criteria are met, your child will be progressed back to full activity following a stepwise process. This progression is individualized and is determined on a case by case basis. Factors such as concussion history, duration and type of symptoms, age, and the type of sports can affect the rate of their progression. The progression consists of six steps. If your child experiences any post-concussion symptoms during any phase of the progression he/she should drop back to the previous level and resume his/her progression once he/she is asymptomatic.

1. No activity- do not progress to step 2 until asymptomatic
2. Light Exertion- Aerobic exercise- walking, stationary bike
3. Moderate Exertion- Sport Specific training- running, skating
4. Heavy Exertion-Non-contact training drills
5. Full contact practice *after medical clearance*
6. Game play

We will review appropriate activities for the day with your child prior to activity. We ask that your child report to us for re-assessment **daily** (or for the days that he/she is in school) until he/she has progressed to unrestricted activity and is fully cleared for return to play.

If you have any questions regarding our protocol or if you need to schedule a Post-Injury ImPACT test, please contact the Athletic Trainer.

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