

## CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

### FACT SHEET FOR ATHLETES

#### What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

#### What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical check up.** A doctor or health care professional can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to practice and game play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

#### What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- \* Headache or "pressure" in the head
- \* Nausea or vomiting
- \* Balance problems or dizziness
- \* Double or blurry vision
- \* Bothered by light
- \* Bothered by noise

#### How can I prevent a concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself:

- \* Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- \* Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- \* Use proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
  - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
  - Worn correctly and fit well
  - Used every time you participate in the sport or activity.