

Nurses' Nook...

Concussions and head injuries...tis the season

Participating in sports teams can be an amazing experience for kids, teaching them things they may not learn as easily in other venues: the value of teamwork, cooperation for a goal, and the experience of belonging to a group. Along with these benefits come the risk of injury.

Concussions are one of those injuries that we certainly don't like to see but do. A concussion is best characterized as a traumatic injury to the brain caused by hitting the head or jarring the head enough for the brain to move around in the skull. It is not generally a visible injury and all CT scans and other brain tests will be negative. To put it in more understandable technology terms, a concussion is a "software" injury and not a "hardware" injury. Because a concussion is generally due to the brain moving around in the skull, helmets do not provide much protection from this particular injury. However they do provide help against injuries more serious than a concussion, such as skull fractures.

Recovery from a concussion is usually fairly quick but occasionally takes more time. In the initial stage of recovery the student needs cognitive rest, which might mean no school, no reading, no texting and electronics, etc. Once the student is feeling better he or she can return to school for partial or full days with some modifications to the school work load. Eventually after the student is symptom free, with full days of school and a full work load, he or she can progress to a return to athletics. This too will be a gradual process either prescribed by the health care provider or using a standard 5 day gradual return to play. After this is completed the student can return to athletics completely, with the approval of the health care provider.

If your student incurs a concussion either inside or outside of school, close contact with your school nurse will help facilitate a smooth transition back to school and back to athletics.

As always you are encouraged to contact the nurse in your child's school for further information.