

Sports Concussion Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Youth Sports Concussion Management Program?

While sports are a great way for teens to stay healthy while learning important team-building skills, there are risks to pushing the limits of speed, strength and endurance. The Youth Sports Concussion Management Program at Kaiser Permanente aims to improve detection, management, and outcome of sports-related concussions in high school athletes. Our goals are to raise awareness of the potential dangers of untreated and inadequately managed concussions, improve identification of concussions, decrease negative concussion-related outcomes, and empower athletes and families to participate in the management of concussions.

What is a concussion?

You can't see a concussion. A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. A concussion can occur with or without loss of consciousness and they affect people differently.

What is baseline testing and why do I need it?

If you play high risk sports you are at increased risk of incurring a sports-related concussion. Here are the some statistics:

- About 10% of all contact sport athletes sustain concussions yearly.
- 63% of all concussions occur in football and up to 20% of football players will sustain a concussion per season.
- An athlete who sustains a concussion is 4-6 times more likely to sustain a second concussion.

Using a computerized exam called ImPACT (Immediate Post Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) we are able to establish a preseason baseline of cognitive abilities. This, 20-30 minute test, tracks information such as memory, reaction time, processing speed, and concentration. It is simple and set up like a video game. This is the same test that is used in the NFL, NHL, MLB, and many college athletic programs.

Does the baseline testing need to be repeated?

Yes, baseline reassessments should be completed during the 7th, 9th and 11th grades.

If I have a concussion how is the ImPACT test used to treat it?

Athletes take the test prior to the season and if the athlete is believed to have suffered a concussion they re-take the exam to help determine the extent of the injury and if the injury has healed. This information is shared with treating physician(s) so that a sound decision can be made as to when return-to-play is appropriate and safe. Testing can be completed as early as 24-hours post-injury or when the athlete appears to be symptom-free.

“I feel fine. Why do I need to take that test?”

Even if you feel “normal”, you may still have symptoms that can be detected by the ImPACT test. Returning to play, or even some normal daily activities, before your brain has healed is dangerous. You put yourself at risk for longer recovery, permanent brain damage, and in rare cases death. Missing one or two games is hard, we know, but one game is not worth missing the whole season or ending your athletic career.

What should I do if I have a concussion?

Once your doctor has examined you and feels that you no longer have symptoms and you feel as though you are back to normal, you can call us directly at **707-624-3000** to schedule your follow-up ImPACT test. You should also review the materials at our website: www.kp.org/vacaville/sportsconcussion, including the brochure, **“What You Need to Know When Your Child Has Had a Concussion.”**

Where can I find more information?

For more information, visit our website at www.kp.org/vacaville/sportsconcussion