

# HARTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

**Additional information on concussions and other head injuries, to include information on the nature and risks of concussions, the risks of premature participation in athletic activities after receiving a concussion, and the importance of obtaining a medical evaluation of a suspected concussion and receiving treatment when necessary can be found on the VPA Sports Medicine Information website. Go to [www.vpaonline.org](http://www.vpaonline.org)**

## **If a concussion is suspected**

The athlete is immediately removed/prohibited from participating in any training session or competition until the athlete has been examined by and received written permission to participate in athletic activities from one of the following health care providers: Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Physician Assistant, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, or Certified Athletic Trainer.

**If it is determined that the athlete did not sustain a concussion**, the health care provider must provide a written statement indicating that the athlete was examined and was not found to have sustained a concussion. Athlete may return to play in accordance with any limitations/restrictions determined by the health care provider. Athlete may still be required to take a post-concussion test prior to return.

**If it is determined that the Athlete did sustain a concussion**, the following procedures must be followed:

### **Return to play**

You are only allowed to begin the graduated return to play protocol when you are completely symptom free. During your recovery and when you still have symptoms, you must abide by complete physical and cognitive rest.

It is critically important to be honest with yourself regarding your symptoms as returning too soon may result in a prolonged recovery time. Only you, the athlete, will know when you are feeling ready to increase your activity level.

### **Gradual Return to Play Following a Concussive Injury**

You must be cleared to “return to play” in accordance with this protocol by a qualified health care provider.

**Post-concussion testing will only be done after the athlete is symptom free and his/her health care provider has determined that the athlete is ready to return.** You must be within your normal range of baseline on a post-concussion Impact test.

The post concussion Impact test will be administered at no cost to the athlete by the HHS/HMMS Athletic Department. The baseline test and post-test will be forwarded to the DHMC Sports Medicine Clinic where the results will be interpreted and a determination made. This coordination will be made by the HHS Athletic Department and will be at no cost to the athlete. The testing may also be done in conjunction with the health care provider’s assessment.

## **After it has been determined that you are ready to return:**

- This return to play plan should start only when you have been without any symptoms for 24 hours.
- It is important to wait for 24 hours between steps because symptoms may develop several hours after completing a step.
- Do not take any pain medications while moving through this plan (no ibuprofen, aspirin, Aleve, or Tylenol).
- Make a follow up appointment with your provider if symptoms develop during this progression.
- Intensity levels: 1 = very easy; 10 = very hard.

### **Step 1:** Aerobic conditioning - Walking, swimming, or stationary cycling.

- Intensity: 4 out of 10.
- Duration: no more than 30 minutes.
- If symptoms return, wait until you are symptom free for 24 hours then repeat Step 1.
- No symptoms for 24 hours, move to Step 2.

### **Step 2:** Sports specific drills – skating drills in hockey, running drills in soccer/basketball.

- Intensity: 5 or 6 out of 10.
- Duration: no more than 60 minutes.
- No head impact activities. No scrimmages/potential for contact.
- If symptoms return, wait until you are symptom free for 24 hours then repeat Step 1.
- No symptoms for 24 hours, move to Step 3.

### **Step 3:** Non-contact training drills – include more complex training drills (passing in soccer/ice hockey/basketball. Running specific pattern plays, etc).

- No head contact, or potential for body impact.
- OK to begin resistance training.
- Intensity: 7 out of 10.
- Duration: no more than 90 minutes.
- If symptoms return, wait until you are symptom free for 24 hours then repeat Step 2.
- No symptoms for 24 hours, move to Step 4.

### **Step 4:** Full contact practice.

- **Only after medical clearance!**
- No intensity/duration restrictions.
- If symptoms return, wait until you are symptom free for 24 hours and repeat Step 3.
- No symptoms for 24 hours, move to Step 5

### **Step 5:** Full clearance for return to play.