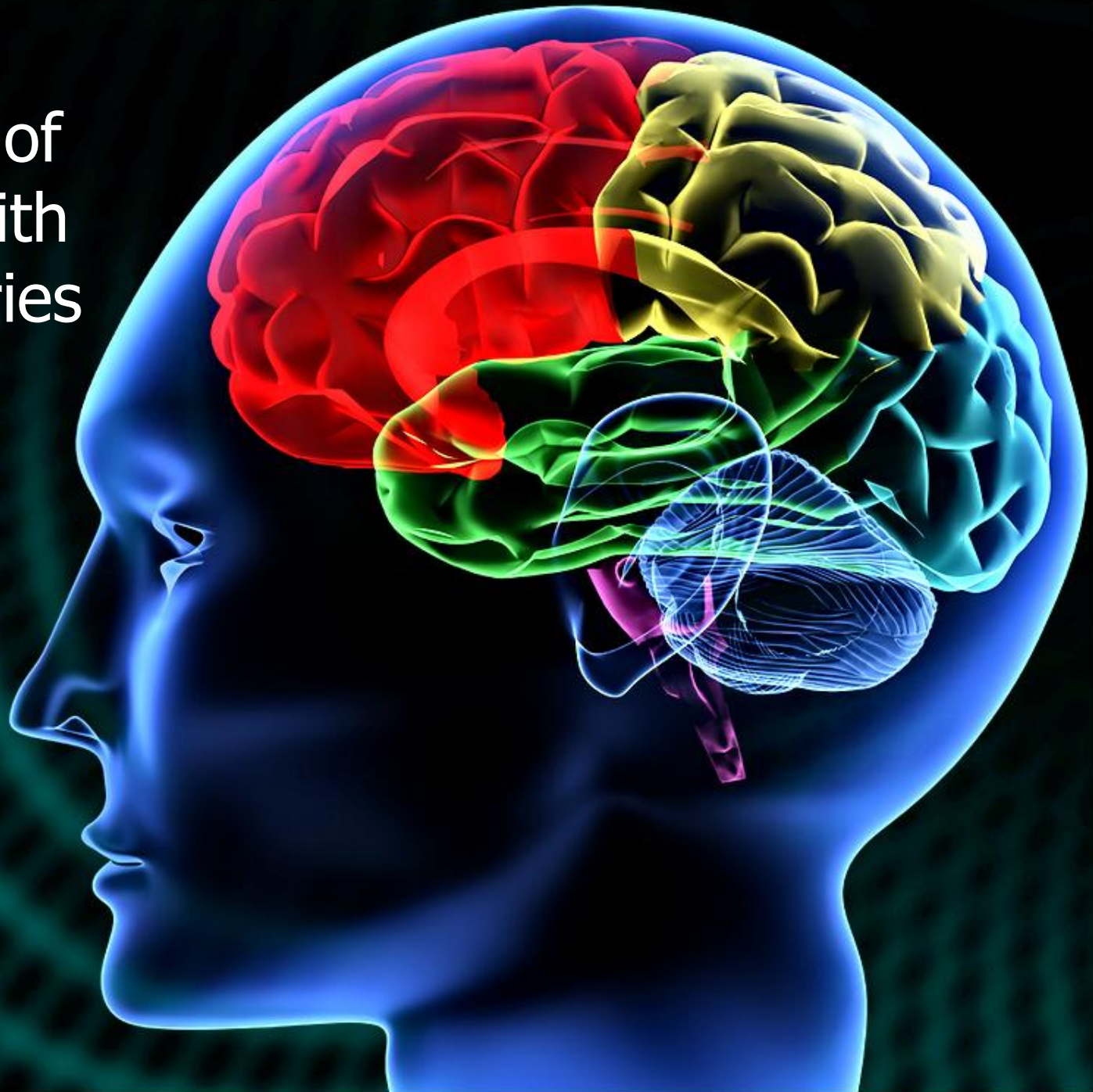


Protection of Athletes with Head Injuries



Utah State Office
of Education

Professional Development Resource

- The following information is provided for parents, administrators, coaches, and supervisors to help ensure safety of participants in sports and physical activities.
- Information is consistent with the Centers for Disease Control's concussion management system. It is also within the parameters of Utah Law governing the management of head injuries in Utah's public school system.



Importance of Concussion Awareness

There is No such thing as minor head trauma!

- Concussions occur more often in sports and recreational activities than previously thought.
- Concussions may result in short term or long term consequences and may even cause death.
- Training in prevention, recognition and management of concussion is necessary for protection of athletes/participants.



Concussion

- The Facts
- Recognition
- Actions
- Recovery
- Management
- Return to Play



The Facts

- A concussion is a brain injury.
- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in any sport or physical activity.



The Facts Continued

- Younger brains and female brains are more vulnerable to concussions and have a longer recovery time.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.



Remember!!!

- If a student is suspected of sustaining a concussion or traumatic brain injury he/she should immediately be removed from a sporting event or activity and evaluated by a qualified health care professional!



Recognizing a Concussion

A coach or supervisor should watch for the following among active participants:

- A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head.
- Any change in a participant's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.



Symptoms Reported by Athlete/Participant

- Headache or “pressure in head”
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems and/or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Feelings of something “not being right”



Signs Observed by Coach, Supervisor or Fellow Participants

Athlete/Participant:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows personality/behavior changes
- Cannot recall events prior to or after collision or fall



Possible Symptoms of Traumatic Head Injury

- Seizures
- Irritability
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Fatigue



Second Concussions

- Once an athlete/participant sustains a concussion, he/she is 3-6 times more likely to sustain a second concussion.
- Second brain impact injuries often cause worse symptoms than the first especially if the initial head injury is not completely resolved.



Action When a Concussion Is Suspected

- Remove the athlete/participant from play
 - Athletes/Participants who exhibit signs or symptoms should not be allowed to return to play.
 - When in doubt, keep the athlete/participant out of play.



Actions Continued

- Have the injured athlete/participant evaluated immediately by a health care professional- *do not try to evaluate yourself!*
- Record the following information to assist the health care professional in assessing the athlete/participant:
 - Cause of injury
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Any memory loss following the injury
 - Any seizures following the injury
 - Any previous concussions



Actions Continued

- Inform parents/guardians about the possible concussion
 - Provide a fact sheet about concussions.
 - Be sure parents understand that child must be seen by a health care professional trained in evaluating for concussion.



Recovery

- All concussions are different.
- Concussion treatment should be individualized.
- Recovery time varies from person to person.



Management

- A health care professional trained in treatment of concussion should establish the management phase.
- Cognitive and physical rest until symptoms resolve is the key to concussion management.
- Any activity that increases blood flow to the brain will cause symptoms and should be avoided.



Activities To Be Avoided/Restricted

- All sports
- Physical Education
- Weightlifting
- Studying, tests, class participation
- Driving
- Computer use
- Video games
- Text messaging
- Carnival rides



School Can Delay Recovery

Typical class activities that require thinking and concentration may actually make a concussion worse and delay recovery time.



Students Returning to School May Need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed.
- Spend fewer hours at school.
- Be given additional time to complete assignments.
- Receive help with schoolwork.
- Reduce time spent reading, writing and on the computer.
- Be granted early dismissal to avoid crowded hallways.



Return to Play

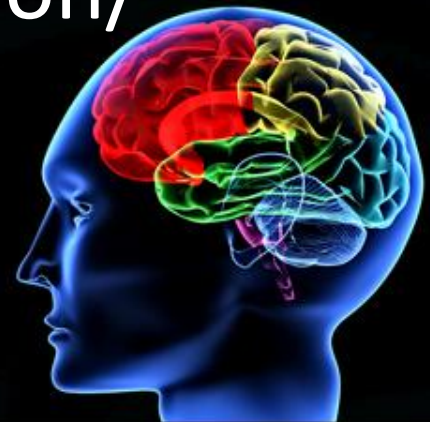
- Allow the athlete/participant to return to play only with a written and signed medical clearance from a health professional trained in concussion evaluation and management.
- *When in doubt, keep them out!*
 - It is better to miss one or two games than the entire season.
 - It is better to miss one or two games than to incur life-changing abnormalities.



Centers for Disease Control

- The Centers for Disease Control have developed numerous concussion management resources ranging from handouts to pamphlets to an online training program. These resources are free and available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/>



Thank you!

