



Central Office: 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT 06109 Phone (860) 721-2822 Fax (860) 721-2823

Berlin: 240 Kensington Road, Berlin, CT 06037 Phone (860) 828-7017 Fax (860) 828-9248

Newington: 131 Cedar Street, Newington, CT 06111 Phone (860) 665-8586 Fax (860) 665-8533

Rocky Hill: 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067 Phone (860) 258-2770 Fax (860) 258-2767

www.ccthd.org

September 5, 2007

Prevent Concussion in Youth Sports

Now that school is back in session and fall youth sports are underway, parents, athletes, and coaches need to consider the topic of sports injuries. One of the more common sports-related injuries is a concussion, which can occur as the result of a fall, a collision with other players or equipment, or a blow to the head. The National Council of Youth Sports reports as many as 3.8 million sports- and recreation-related concussions occur every year in the United States. The American Academy of Pediatrics points out that there are 1.4 million traumatic brain injury-related deaths, hospitalizations, and emergency department visits annually; 75-90% of these cases are concussion and mild traumatic brain injuries.

A concussion is an injury to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly and ricochet off the inside the skull, resulting in changes in the chemistry of the brain. All concussions are serious. The symptoms of a concussion can include headache, nausea, vomiting, balance problems, dizziness, fatigue, trouble falling asleep, sleeping more or less than usual, drowsiness, sensitivity to light or noise, irritability, nervousness, numbness or tingling, concentration and memory difficulties, visual problems, feeling “foggy,” sluggish, or more emotional. A concussion may or may not involve a loss of consciousness. Most of the time, the symptoms disappear after 1 or 2 weeks.

In youth sports, an athlete may have a concussion and not be aware of it; sometimes symptoms are not noticed until hours or days after the injury occurs. It is important for all team members, coaches, and parents to be watchful for collisions or accidents that may involve injury to the head. Players who appear confused, dazed, clumsy, or have problems remembering, or who report any of the symptoms of concussion, should be removed from play and referred for medical attention. Further, they should not be allowed to participate in any sport again until a health care professional has given permission to resume previous activities.

While some athletes, their families, or their coaches may be tempted to put the injured youth back in the game before obtaining medical permission, doing so would place the athlete in danger of getting a second concussion.

Since the brain is still healing from the first concussion, second or later concussions can have very serious consequences. This second concussion is called Second Impact Syndrome, and may cause permanent brain injury, coma, and even death. Further, repeated concussions can have an additive effect, resulting in permanent cognitive injury known as Chronic Traumatic Brain Injury.

Because of the seriousness of concussion, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have developed a program called “Heads Up: Concussion in Youth Sports.” Parents, coaches, and athletes can obtain information about preventing, recognizing, and responding to a concussion by obtaining a free tool kit from the CDC. The tool kit consists of fact sheets for coaches, parents, and athletes, a magnet and a poster containing concussion facts, and a quizzes. It can be ordered or downloaded at no cost on the internet at <http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports>.

To learn more about concussions and youth sports, visit the CDC ‘s website or call 1-800-232-4636, or contact the National Council of Youth Sports at 772-781-1452 (www.ncys.org/newsconcussion.html), or the American Academy of Pediatrics at www.aap.org. To preview the “Heads Up” tool kit or learn about any other public health concern, contact the Central Connecticut Health District at 860-721-2824 (www.ccthd.org).