

Dear Parent / Legal Guardian,

As you may be aware, over the past few years the topic of concussions in the NFL has piqued the interest of many and the issue has even reached as far as Congress to hold hearings on the subject. In our state of New Jersey, there was a similar move to have legislation enacted to deal with this very serious issue and media attention has brought this topic of concussions to the front page of our lives.

Several years ago, the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association's (NJSIAA) Medical Advisory Committee mandated that this be addressed with a three pronged approach of education, written policy, and management. We have those mechanisms in place and want to test each student-athlete for their cognitive base. This is mandatory for any student interested in playing a sport.

This cognitive test called ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing), which is taken by a computer, serves as a baseline for that athlete. If concussed, the initial test results would help the attending physician arrive at a return to play decision (RTP). The results of that test will aid in the final decision but it is not the final determining factor. It is simply another tool to help in the RTP assessment. We will be offering an "at home" option. If you already have taken the ImPACT test, a copy of the results must be on file.

To highlight the new mandated NJSIAA concussion policy, once a student athlete is concussed, the following must be complete prior to return to play:

- The student athlete with concussion symptoms must be removed from their activity immediately. There is no return that day.
- The student athlete will be referred to their physician for diagnosis. Your physician **MUST** have been trained in the evaluation and management of concussions (N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41, 4).
- If concussed, they must be symptom free for 7 days. The 7 day count begins once symptoms disappear.
- They then (and not prior to) will start functional testing of 5 days **AFTER** they are cleared by their physician (above statute applies) to begin the return to play protocol.
- At completion of the 5 days, they must be cleared by their physician to return to their sport.

When it comes to head injuries, I am very conservative in the management of concussions. I always have the best interests of the student-athletes first and foremost. The ImPACT test will only help the student-athletes. I rely on both the injured athlete and his friends to tell me information to help deal with this particular injury. Having a baseline test will aid in the diagnosing of concussions.

We will be utilizing the Concussion Center at Overlook Hospital to administer the test and will offer the opportunity to test at your home. This test is **FREE**. To take the test, you will go onto the sports medicine section of the website. Instructions on how to take the test will be in the "Downloads" section.

Thank you in advance for your understanding. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. You can email me at rdigregorio@shp.org or by calling my office at 973-325-6650.

Regards,

Rob DiGregorio, MS, ATC