



CLEARANCE...HOORAY!

Congratulations on being cleared for full academics and returning to sports as tolerated! Recovery from concussion can be long and present numerous challenges for both athletes and non-athletes.

It is important to realize that you can reduce your risk of injury. Take steps to help prevent future injuries and/or return of concussion symptoms, such as those below.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS

It is strongly recommended that individuals with a history of concussion refrain from any rotational/high velocity activities for at least six months from the date of clearance (and up to one year, depending on previous injuries). These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Amusement park rides
- Swinging/spinning
- Trampolines
- Water tubing/skiing/boarding
- Diving (diving board, cliff diving, sky diving)
- Bungee jumping
- Snow tubing/skiing/sledding/snowboarding
- Any other activity that causes acceleration/deceleration or rotational motion to the head or neck

WEAR A HELMET

Helmets can help to prevent head injuries such as skull fractures when fitted properly. However, even with a helmet, you should avoid hits to the head or blows to the body. Wear a helmet with these activities:

- Contact sports, such as football, ice hockey, lacrosse
- Skateboarding, in-line skating, or riding a scooter
- Batting or base running during baseball and softball games or practices
- Catching during baseball and softball games or practices
- Horseback riding
- Bike riding
- Snowboarding and skiing

See the attached flyer for your activity to ensure a proper helmet fit.

NECK STRENGTHENING

A recent study of over 6,700 high school athletes has shown that overall neck strength is a significant predictor of concussion. ***In fact, for every one pound (1 lb) increase in neck strength, odds of concussion decreased by five percent (5%).***

Increase your neck strength by doing the cervical strengthening exercises on the attached handout, or go to <http://www.momsteam.com/health-safety/stronger-necks-may-reduce-concussion-risk-study> for more neck strengthening exercises to add to your resistance training.

SAFER PLAY

There is growing interest in waiting until student-athletes reach 14 years of age to participate in riskier sports activities, and in requiring helmets for riskier sports, in part due to the increased vulnerability to injury of a child's brain and prolonged recovery for children compared to adults:

- Require helmets for women's lacrosse and field hockey
- Wait until high school for:
 - Boxing
 - Heading in soccer (<http://www.sportslegacy.org/policy/safer-soccer/>)
 - Tackling in football and rugby
 - Checking in hockey and lacrosse

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- CDC's HEADS UP Resource Center:
For training, information, and the HEADS UP Concussion and Helmet Safety App -
Download for FREE on the App Store or Google play!
<http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/resources/index.html>

REFERENCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention. Available at:
www.cdc.gov/headup/helmets/index.html. Accessed June 30, 2015

Collins CL et al. Neck strength: A protective factor reducing risk for concussion in high school sports. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*. 2014; 35:309-319.