

What Should Happen When a Concussion Is Suspected?

The process described here is for athletes who have taken an ImPACT baseline test or who have access to ImPACT testing through their school or physician.

When a concussion is suspected, a coach or other responsible staff person is required by California law to immediately remove the athlete from play. The law requires the athlete to be evaluated and cleared by a concussion specialist prior to returning to play. CIF rules, which apply to all sanctioned high school sports, require an MD (Doctor of Medicine) or DO (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine) to clear the athlete to return to play.

The athlete should take a computerized post-injury neurocognitive test within 24-72 hours after the injury and bring the results to his or her treating physician. The Santa Rosa City Schools and NCCM use ImPACT for this testing (see link below). The athlete can take the post-injury test at school or at a physician's office where the ImPACT tool is available online. Qualified staff at the school can administer the test, but a physician must interpret the test results. Athletes that have not taken a baseline test can still take a post-injury test; the treating physician can use age-based standards to help interpret the results.

The comparison report for an athlete with baseline test data in the system provides 6 pages of information. These 6 pages should all be printed and given to the athlete to take to his or her physician for assessment. Baseline information should be printed with post-injury results when available. The post-injury report is one element in an overall process that the physician will utilize to diagnose, treat and oversee return to play: it is not a replacement for qualified medical evaluation and should never be used by itself to manage a concussion.

To find a physician trained and qualified to interpret an ImPACT post-injury report, visit the North Coast Concussion Management website for coverage in Sonoma County, or visit the ImPACT *Find a Care Provider* website page. The links are provided below.

Cognitive and physical rest is an important part of treating a concussion injury. If post-injury test results are considered by the physician to be outside of normal ranges, the athlete must continue to refrain from practice and competition. A second post injury test may be administered 1 to 2 weeks after the first post-injury test if the treating physician recommends it. Once scores have returned to baseline level and symptoms have resolved, the athlete can begin a monitored, gradual return to play.

Parents and athletes may request their data (printout or PDF) from the school at any time from the ImPACT administrator.

Helpful Links	
Assembly Bill 25 (Hayashi)	http://legiscan.com/CA/text/AB25/id/353746
CDC – Centers for Disease Control	http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/
CIF - California Interscholastic Federation	http://www.cifstate.org/
ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing)	Home - http://www.impacttest.com/ Find a Care Provider - http://impacttest.com/find_care_provider
North Coast Concussion Management	http://www.northcoastconcussion.org/