A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. The effects of a concussion can be serious, and youth still healing from a concussion are at increased risk for a subsequent concussion. Repeat concussions can increase recovery time and in rare cases, can increase the chances of long-term problems (e.g., permanent brain damage) and can even be fatal.  

Each year, it’s estimated that approximately 1.6 million to 3.8 million sport-related TBIs occur in the U.S., including TBIs for which no medical care is pursued.

CURRENT MICHIGAN LAW (2013)

On June 30, 2013, Michigan’s sport concussion law went into effect, making Michigan the 39th state to enact a law regulating concussions in youth sports and return to “athletic activity” (i.e., a program or event including practice, competition against another team, club, entity or individual, or participation in physical education classes that are a part of a school curriculum).

Concussion Awareness Training

Coaches, employees, volunteers, and other adults involved with a youth athletic activity sponsored or supported by an organizing entity are required to take a concussion awareness online training program with content approved as compliant with the law.

Educational Training

The organizing entity must: a) provide educational materials to each athlete and their parent/guardian on concussions and their consequences, and b) obtain a signed statement by each athlete and their parent/guardian acknowledging receipt of the materials.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

1. Remove the athlete from play.

Any youth athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion during the athletic activity must be immediately removed from physical participation. A coach or other adult employed by or volunteering for the organizing entity can remove the athlete from play.

2. Ensure the athlete is evaluated.

Until the athlete is medically evaluated by an appropriate health professional* experienced in evaluating for concussions (e.g., doctor, athletic trainer), the athlete cannot return to play. A parent, coach, or person not licensed by the state, cannot examine the athlete for a concussion or put the athlete back to play. This violates the law.

3. Follow the return-to-play plan.

To return to physical participation, the youth athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion must be evaluated and receive written clearance from an appropriate health professional* authorizing return to physical activity. Medical clearance should only be provided if an athlete is symptom free and completes a graduated return-to-play plan.

* A health professional licensed by the state of MI and whose scope of practice includes recognition, treatment, and management of concussions.

References