

Dear Health Care Provider:

Thank you for the medical care you provide student-athletes in your area.

Recently the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) has implemented some additional safety guidelines regarding return to play after a suspected concussion. These guidelines are consistent with recent literature and representative of the concern we have in authorizing any athlete to return to competition without proper medical clearance.

The FHSAA requires an athlete with a suspected concussion must be immediately removed from participation and directed to an appropriate health care professional (AHCP), defined as an MD or a DO, for evaluation and management of this injury. Return to activity requires the athlete to be completely symptom free, off of all medications associated with this concussive incident, with a normal neurological exam and as available, all preseason computer neuropsychological testing returned to baseline, after which time they need to complete a step-wise return to play protocol under the supervision of a licensed athletic trainer, coach or other medical professional. A written medical clearance from an AHCP is required for an athlete to return to competition. A form is available from the FHSAA or the athlete's school for this purpose.

To further promote this emphasis on safety and to avoid any confusion on the part of any youth sport coach or organization; we are asking your assistance in reviewing any discharge instructions that are provided to any youth athlete receiving evaluation or treatment under your care. Our goal is to reduce or eliminate any potential for increased risk of further injury for an athlete recently treated for suspected head injury.

We are requesting, upon discharge from your care, documentation clearly indicating your medical expectations of follow up care for this injury. If you are making an activity related decision, it is recommended that you review the specific demands of the sport/activity this particular athlete is engaged. Sometimes there may be an athletic trainer or volunteer team physician that is associated with the school or organization that can be accessed for consultation regarding return to activity readiness. If you are **not** medically authorizing this athlete to return to sports related activity; please clearly note this on all documentation that may be submitted to parents, school or organization authorities.

Prior to medically authorizing a return to activity, please review the following progressions of the concussion management plan recognized by The Florida High School Athletic Association.

1. No athlete should return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a suspected concussion. "When in doubt, sit them out!"
2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion must be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional as soon as possible and practical.
3. Any athlete who has sustained a concussion must be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional (as defined above) prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
4. After evaluation and examination by an AHCP, Return to play must follow a step-wise protocol as defined by FHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and under the supervision of an AHCP, athletic trainer, coach or other health care professional. **Form AT18**
5. A written medical clearance from an AHCP is required for return to competition. **Form AT18**

For current and up-to-date information on concussions, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussioninyouthsports/>

<http://www.seeingstarsfoundation.org>

Sincerely yours,
FHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee