

## **“The 15 Critical Questions Regarding Concussions, Baseline Testing, and Return to Play Medical Decisions”**

### **1. What is a concussion? How do they occur?**

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that is caused by a blow to the head and/or body. When your head/body suffers a blow, your brain will bounce off of your skull and temporarily stop the brain from functioning. Concussions can occur from playground injuries, falling off a bicycle, fights, falling, car accidents and of course ALL athletic sports.

### **2. What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?**

As it may be an indication of concussion, do not hesitate to seek medical attention if an athlete displays or describes experiencing any of the following symptoms:

Signs observed	Signs reported by athlete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appears to be dazed or stunned</li> <li>• Is confused about assignment</li> <li>• Forgets plays</li> <li>• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent</li> <li>• Moves clumsily</li> <li>• Answers questions slowly</li> <li>• Loses consciousness (even temporarily)</li> <li>• Shows behavior or personality change</li> <li>• Forgets events prior to hit (retrograde amnesia)</li> <li>• Forgets events after hit (anterograde amnesia)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li> <li>• Double or fuzzy vision</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li> <li>• Feeling sluggish</li> <li>• Feeling "foggy"</li> <li>• Change in sleep pattern</li> <li>• Concentration or memory problems</li> </ul>

### **3. What tests should you get for your child/athlete to make sure they are safe?**

Every child/athlete should have a baseline ImPACT neurocognitive test. Optimally, this test should be taken for athletes before the start of the season, but even midseason or post season your child/athlete should always have a baseline on file. This test will give physicians a true neurocognitive normal prior to a child/athlete getting concussed. An additional test is a balance assessment to look at a child/athletes postural stability. Universities and specialized clinics are incorporating an additional assessment for balance testing like BESS, SAC or CDP (Computerized Dynamic Posturography). Together, ImPACT and a balance assessment make up a full comprehensive baseline evaluation to keep your child/athlete safer.