

## Concussion Baseline Testing

### What is a concussion baseline test?

A concussion baseline test is a **pre-injury evaluation** that measures how your child's brain normally functions when they are healthy. It typically looks at:

- Symptoms
- Balance
- Cognitive function

This test creates a **personal “snapshot”** of your child's normal brain function and balance

### Why is baseline testing important?

If your child later sustains a concussion, we can compare their post-injury results to their **own baseline**, rather than to averages or estimates. This helps your provider:

- Identify subtle changes caused by a concussion
- Track recovery over time
- Feel confident in **return-to-school and return-to-play decisions**

### Who should consider baseline testing?

Baseline testing is recommended for:

- Children and teens **≥9 years old** who participate in sports or activities with a risk of head injury
  - Contact sports: football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, lacrosse, ice hockey, field hockey
  - Non-contact (but with collision risk): cheer, baseball, softball, wrestling, gymnastics
  - Other: horseback riding, skateboarding, skiing, motocross

Even one concussion can affect learning, sleep, and mood—having a baseline allows for **better, safer care if an injury occurs**.

### When should baseline testing be done?

- When your child is **healthy and symptom-free**
- Ideally **before the sports season starts**
- Baseline testing is usually repeated
  - Elementary-Middle School: **every year** (brain developing rapidly)
  - High School: **every other year**

### How to take a baseline test:

- For **high school contact-sport athletes**, testing is often done with the school athletic trainer (and in the event of injury, they share baseline and post-injury results with us)
- For schools without baseline testing (**especially elementary and middle school**), take a baseline at home on the SportsSafe Website. The process is easy and takes about 20 minutes to obtain both a balance and cognitive baseline. Read more on [The SportsSafe Website](http://TheSportsSafeWebsite).



## General Concussion Information

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that occurs when a hard hit to the head (or body) causes chemical and blood flow changes in the brain. This injury causes concussion symptoms, which vary in severity. After a hard hit, it is normal to feel **localized soreness or tenderness** where the head or body was struck. However, **symptoms beyond soreness** suggest the brain may have been affected. **If your child has a head or body impact and then experiences any concussion symptoms (see below), you should suspect a concussion.**

Important facts:

- The head does **not** have to be directly hit to cause a concussion
- Loss of consciousness is **uncommon** and occurs in only about **10%** of concussions

When in doubt, **sit them out** and seek medical evaluation.

### Common concussion symptoms

Symptoms can vary, and **not all symptoms need to be present**.

What your child or teen may complain of:	What parents may notice:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headache or head pressure</li> <li>• Dizziness or feeling off-balance</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Blurry or double vision</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li> <li>• Feeling slowed down, tired, or “in a fog”</li> <li>• Trouble focusing, remembering, or thinking</li> <li>• Feeling “not right”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appears dazed, confused, or more forgetful</li> <li>• Trouble focusing or following instructions</li> <li>• Mood or behavior changes (more irritable, emotional, anxious, or withdrawn)</li> <li>• Slower responses to questions</li> <li>• Sleep changes (much more or less than usual)</li> <li>• Decline in school performance</li> <li>• Avoiding lights, screens, or noise</li> </ul>

### Important concussion facts:

- Concussions can happen in **any sport or activity**
- All concussions should be taken seriously
- While healing, the risk of worsening injury is much higher—even with a milder hit
- **When in doubt, sit them out**

### Seek medical care right away or go to the ER if:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vomiting occurs <b>more than once</b></li> <li>• Headaches are worsening and worsening or not improving with rest or medication</li> <li>• There is a <b>drastic change in behavior</b></li> <li>• Loss of consciousness lasted <b>≥30 seconds</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A seizure occurred after the injury</li> <li>• Speech is slurred</li> <li>• There are one-sided symptoms (unequal pupils, weakness, numbness)</li> <li>• You feel something is “<b>very unusual or wrong</b>”</li> </ul>
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### How to reach us

To schedule an appointment, please call: **(512) 458-5323** or **(512) 814-1616**

Read more about concussions on [TheSportsSafeWebsite](http://TheSportsSafeWebsite)

