

Computer-Based Testing for “Concussion”
The ImPACT Test
www.impacttest.com

Mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI), more commonly known as concussion, is estimated to affect 3 million athletes per year nationwide. Most of these affected athletes are high school student-athletes or younger. Most of these injuries go untreated.

Adolescent athletes respond and recover very differently from the professional, adult athletes that are our heroes. The management of concussion can and should be different for younger athletes. The tools used to evaluate professional athletes are now available for high school athletes.

The ImPACT test is a computer based neuro-cognitive testing program that evaluates many facets of the brain’s function. It was designed to look for the changes most commonly seen in mild traumatic brain injury or concussion. It can detect the subtle changes in brain function that occur in concussion and, more importantly, measure when those alterations have resolved.

Why should ImPACT testing be used for athletes?

- The test provides objective data that a concussion (mTBI) has occurred and aids in determining when the affects of concussion have resolved.
- Testing should prevent “second impact syndrome”, a rare and often lethal complication of minor concussions that occurs when athletes are returned to the field too early. It is prevented by ensuring athletes do not return to play until test scores are normal.
- The average “recovery” for a teenager from a concussion (mTBI) is 3 weeks. Testing helps return the more mild concussions to play at an appropriate time. It also identifies when symptoms last longer than expected.
- Untreated concussions can lead to long lasting symptoms. This is called the post-concussive syndrome.

Pre-Testing

It is recommended that all contact athletes be pre-tested. A baseline exam is administered creating a profile for the athlete. It is best to test all contact athletes (football, soccer, field hockey, basketball, lacrosse and wrestling). Your child needs to be tested only once, even if he/she plays three contact sports.

Post-Testing

If a suspected concussion occurs, the athlete is then tested at 24-48 hours after the injury. If an abnormal test occurs, the athlete will be retested until test scores are normal. A standard protocol will be followed by the athletic trainer to determine when it is safe to return to play. You will be given a copy of the protocol if your child sustains a mild traumatic brain injury.

Cost

The ImPACT test is not free. A five dollar (\$5) donation by all (or most) of the contact athletes will cover all pre- and post-injury testing for the year. Athletes only need to be retested every other year.

Our goal is for every contact athlete to be pre-tested. The \$5 donation will be waived, if needed, so that cost does not prevent any student-athlete from being tested.

Make Checks Payable to Maryland Orthopedic Specialists

For more information:

Visit the ImPACT test website at www.impacttest.com.