



PERFORMANCE

INJURY CARE & SPORTS MEDICINE

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Concussion Management Team

Why See a Sports Medicine Specialist?

Sports related concussions have a unique issue regarding recovery. When returning to sport the athlete must be asymptomatic with exertion and returned to play with a progression of exercise and sports related functional exercises. This particular aspect of returning to play is our area of expertise. Here at PICSM we have accumulated over 22 years of experience in returning athletes back to sport.

Our Concussion Team!

Dr. Phillip M. Steele, MD has been specializing in concussion management for athletes since 1999 and has given numerous lectures on concussions in sport throughout the Rocky Mountain region. His passion for treatment of head injuries in sports dates back to his time as a US Ski Team Physician for the Nordic Combined Team and the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics. He also has specialized training with ImPact Neurocognitive testing and no one in Montana has more experience. Dr. Steele helps with event coverage for our local High Schools and Small Fry Football.

Dr. Buzz Walton, MD recently completed his fellowship in Primary Care Sports Medicine and served as a Team Physician for Rocky Mountain College and the Billings area High Schools. He gained valuable experience with ImPact Neurocognitive testing and was well versed in returning athletes back to play during his fellowship. He is actively involved in the weekly after school high school training rooms at both Helena and Capital High Schools as well as a weekly visit to the Townsend Bulldogs. In addition he provides event coverage and sports medicine support to the Helena Small Fry program.

Abbey Barnhart, PA-C has a special interest in concussion injuries in soccer. She was a member of Helena High Schools Soccer team and is passionate about making sure both our local high schools have safe return to sport after a concussion. She is experienced in return to play protocols and ImPact testing and has been actively involved in the weekly after school high school training room visits and event coverage at both schools.



What is a concussion? A concussion is a brain injury that is caused by a blow to the head or body that has resulted in accelerated forces to your head and neck, causing a bruise to the brain. This force may occur from contact with another player, hitting a hard surface such as the ground or floor, being hit by a piece of equipment such as a bat or ball, or a motor vehicle accident. A concussion can change the way your brain functions. Concussion symptoms can range from mild to severe and may present very differently with each individual athlete or patient. 90% of all concussion injuries do not include loss of consciousness.

What are the symptoms of a concussion? The most common symptoms of a concussion include:

- Amnesia
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Headache
- Feeling sluggish
- Foggy or groggy
- Loss of consciousness
- Feeling unusually irritable
- Balance problems
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Slowed reaction time
- Concentration or memory problems

The Dylan Steiger Protection of Youth Athletes Act was recently signed into law and took effect during the 2013-14 athletic season. It requires that all athletes suspected of a concussion have clearance by a medical provider before returning to play. Once initially evaluated and cleared for progression to play, each athlete is required to complete a 6 step program before returning to full participation. Dr. Steele was actively involved in helping to write the progression to play guidelines for Montana and every member of our "Concussion Team" is well versed on concussion management and returning your athlete back to sport.

What is Impact Neurocognitive Testing? Computer based neurocognitive testing is used by the NFL, NBA, NHL, and all division 1 NCAA sports programs. No one in Montana has more experience than our staff in the using of baseline testing or post concussion testing with this valuable tool. We help with base line testing for both Capital & Helena High Schools and review much of the data after yearly testing. We work closely with both high schools helping to establish our return to play program and post injury testing program. For those athletes without baseline testing we utilize post injury testing to help understand the depth of injury and when brain function has returned to normal.

What is Progression To Play? Each sport has a unique progression to play. At PICSM we specialize in returning your athlete back to their sport in a timely but safe manner. We are the experts on sports related concussion and can help you and your athlete on their path to recovery. Although each concussion is a unique event with the severity of concussion depending on which parts of the athlete's brain was injured, we are well versed on the latest recommendations and protocols. We understand the risks of returning an athlete back to sport too quickly and the importance of a gradual progression back to sport to prevent re-injury.