

Summer 2024 Concussion Baseline Testing



"The Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation is thrilled to partner with UPMC Sports Medicine and deliver the HeadsUP Pittsburgh program to athletes across our region. HeadsUP Pittsburgh is a vitally important program, providing families in our region valuable resources to combat the concussion epidemic in young athletes. We are proud to play a role in this annual offering, as we join with UPMC Sports Medicine to improve the lives of youth in our region through the power of sport."

— **Yvonne Maher**
Executive Director,
Pittsburgh Penguins
Foundation

For more information about HeadsUP Pittsburgh concussion baseline testing, visit UPMC.com/HeadsUP. To learn more about the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, visit PittsburghPenguinsFoundation.org.

HeadsUP Pittsburgh is a partnership between UPMC Sports Medicine and the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation to offer concussion baseline testing, as well as educational programs, to athletes in every major sport, cheerleading, dance, and countless other physical activities.

In 2024, we are celebrating the fourteenth year of the HeadsUP Pittsburgh program. Since 2010, HeadsUP has baseline tested over 30,500 young people across 39 different sports and provided concussion education awareness to nearly 63,000 parents, coaches, referees, and teachers. The program has expanded each year to serve more youth across the region and include a wider spectrum of sports.

UPMC Sports Medicine is incredibly grateful for the continued support from the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation, as they not only fund the program but also provide increased exposure and education about the importance of proper concussion testing and treatment, especially in youth sports.

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Concussion Baseline Testing

Baseline testing is an examination conducted by trained health care professionals to assess an athlete's baseline or "normal" brain function at a healthy state (when it is not injured). Specifically, a baseline neurocognitive test measures such things as concentration, attention, learning and memory, and reaction time, as well as any pre-existing symptoms similar to concussion symptoms like headaches or trouble falling asleep. Baseline tests are administered before a concussion occurs and can be used as a comparison in the instance of a sustained concussion.

HeadsUP Pittsburgh uses a computer-based online test called ImPACT® (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) to establish a baseline of cognitive function for each athlete. The baseline test will then be used as part of a comprehensive clinical evaluation to determine a course of recovery following a concussion. The baseline testing that you receive today is brought to you by the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation and the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program.

How ImPACT® Works

Developed by UPMC's concussion experts, the ImPACT (ages 10+) and Pediatric ImPACT (ages 5-9) tools set a baseline for normal functioning brain activities. They're the most effective tools for comparing a person's neurocognitive state before a concussion occurs.

The computer-based ImPACT and Pediatric ImPACT tests take approximately 30 minutes to complete and are designed to evaluate and document multiple aspects of an athlete's neurocognitive state – brain processing speed, memory, reaction time, and visual motor skills.

These tests alone do not diagnose a concussion, identify past concussions, or prevent future concussions. Experts use these tools to get baseline data when a player is in a non-concussed or "normal" state and as part of a complete assessment process to manage head injuries more accurately. The result of the baseline test is used as a benchmark (comparison) tool to determine if an athlete can safely return to play following a concussion. UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program neuropsychologists advise baseline concussion testing each year for children ages 12 and under and every two years for children ages 13 and older.

About the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation

Founded in 2010, the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation is the 501c3 philanthropic arm of the 5X Stanley Cup Champion Pittsburgh Penguins. From teamwork on the ice to teamwork in our community, it is the goal of the Penguins Foundation to assist Pittsburghers in need and our region's children. Through programs focused on wellness, education, and youth hockey, the Penguins Foundation continually aims to create one strong community through the power of hockey.

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