

# Summer 2020 Baseline Concussion Testing



*"Ten years ago, the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation partnered with UPMC Sports Medicine to address critical sports injuries. At that time, the most debilitating injury in youth sports was concussions — an issue that continues today. Based on CDC and UPMC research, we created HeadsUP Pittsburgh. There is truly no program in youth sports or sports medicine that rivals what this program has achieved. Over 20,000 children in 31 sports and activities have been tested through HeadsUP Pittsburgh — just incredible. Plus, our program is all-encompassing. It not only provides baseline testing but also shares educational resources with parents, coaches, officials, and schools. It offers the most advanced treatment techniques, research, and training tools like neck strengthening kits, which are designed to reduce the likelihood of sustaining a concussion. The results are even more impressive with us seeing an increase in concussions diagnosed early. Further, the FDA provided approval for a pediatric version of HeadsUP. These results and our efforts have helped us achieve our goal: ensuring a safe return to play and school for young athletes. We are extremely proud to fund HeadsUP Pittsburgh and to continue to collaborate with UPMC Sport Medicine and Dr. Collins on a program that truly is making a difference."*

— **Dave Soltesz**  
President, Pittsburgh  
Penguins Foundation

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

In 2020, we are celebrating the tenth year of the HeadsUP Pittsburgh program. Since 2011, HeadsUP has baseline tested over 20,000 young people across 31 different sports and provided concussion education awareness to over 50,000 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.

**For more information about baseline concussion testing, please visit [ReThinkConcussions.com](https://www.ReThinkConcussions.com). To learn more about HeadsUP Pittsburgh, visit [PittsburghPenguinsFoundation.org](https://www.PittsburghPenguinsFoundation.org).**

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### Baseline Concussion 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 hand of the 5X Stanley Cup Champion Pittsburgh Penguins. With the belief that "Kids Are The Future," the Penguins Foundation focuses its efforts on making an impact on the lives of the littlest fans of the Penguins team and organization. Through programs related to the Penguins Foundation's pillars of youth hockey, wellness, education, and community development, the Foundation has been able to make countless assists to the community in just a few short seasons including an overall contribution of over \$44 million to charitable causes since 2010.

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