

Pre-season

CONCUSSION EDUCATION SHEET



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that can't be seen on x-rays, CT or MRI scans. It affects the way a player thinks and can cause a variety of symptoms.

What causes a concussion?

Any blow to the head, face or neck, or somewhere else on the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion. Examples include getting body-checked in hockey or hitting one's head on the floor in gym class.

When should I suspect a concussion?

A concussion should be suspected in any athlete who sustains a significant impact to the head, face, neck, or body and reports any symptoms or demonstrates any visual signs of a concussion. A concussion should also be suspected if an athlete reports any concussion symptoms to one of their peers, parents, teachers, or coaches or if anyone witnesses an athlete exhibiting any of the visual signs of concussion. Some athletes will develop symptoms immediately, while others will develop delayed symptoms, beginning 24 to 48 hours after the injury.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

A person does not need to be knocked out (lose consciousness) to have had a concussion. Common symptoms include:

- Headaches or head pressure
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Blurred or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Balance problems
- Feeling tired or having no energy
- Not thinking clearly
- Feeling slowed down
- Easily upset or angered
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Feeling more emotional
- Sleeping more or sleeping less
- Having a hard time falling asleep
- Difficulty working on a computer
- Difficulty reading
- Difficulty learning new information

What are the visual signs of a concussion?

Visual signs of a concussion may include:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion or inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant stare
- Balance and gait difficulties, poor co-ordination, stumbling, slow laboured movements
- Facial injury after head trauma
- Clutching head

What should I do if I suspect a concussion?

If any player is suspected of sustaining a concussion during sports they should be

immediately removed from the game or practice. Any player who is suspected of having sustained a concussion during sports must not be allowed to return to the same game or practice.

It is important that ALL players with a suspected concussion undergo medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, as soon as possible. It is also important that ALL players with a suspected concussion receive written medical clearance from a medical doctor before returning to sport.

When can the player return to school and sports?

It is important that all players diagnosed with a concussion follow a step-wise return to school and sports- related activities that includes the following Return-to-School and Return-to-Sport Strategies. It is important that youth return to full-time school activities before progressing to stage 5 and 6 of the Return-to-Sport Strategy.

Return-to-School Strategy

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Daily activities at home that do not give the student-athlete symptoms	Typical activities during the day as long as they do not increase symptoms (i.e. reading, texting, screen time). Start at 5-15 minutes at a time and gradually build up.	Gradual return to typical activities.
2	School activities	Homework, reading or other cognitive activities outside of the classroom.	Increase tolerance to cognitive work.
3	Return to school part-time	Gradual introduction of schoolwork. May need to start with a partial school day or with increased breaks during the day.	Increase academic activities.
4	Return to school full-time	Gradually progress.	Return to full academic activities and catch up on missed school work.

Sport-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Symptom- limiting activity	Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms.	Gradual re-introduction of work/school activities.
2	Light aerobic activity	Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance training.	Increase heart rate.
3	Sport-specific exercise.	Running or skating drills. No head impact activities.	Add movement.
4	Non-contact training drills	Harder training drills, e.g. passing drills. May start progressive resistance training.	Exercise, co-ordination and increased thinking.
5	Full contact practice	Following medical clearance and complete return to school.	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff.
6	Return to sport	Normal game play.	

Tables adapted from McCrory et al (2017).

How long will it take for the player to recover?

Most players who sustain a concussion will make a complete recovery within one to two weeks while most youth players will recover within one to four weeks. Approximately 15 to 30 per cent of patients will experience persistent symptoms (more than two weeks for adults; more than four weeks for youth) that may require additional medical assessment and management.

How can I help prevent concussions and their consequences?

Concussion prevention, recognition and management require players to follow the rules and regulations of their sport, respect their opponents, avoid head contact and report suspected concussions.

To learn more about concussions please visit:

www.parachute.ca/concussion

SIGNATURES (OPTIONAL): The following signatures certify that the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian have reviewed the above information related to concussion.

Printed name of athlete

Printed name of parent

Signature of athlete

Signature of parent

Date