

Signs and Symptoms of Concussions –

Symptoms:

- Nausea, vomiting
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Fatigue
- Light headedness
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Disorientation
- Feeling stunned/ seeing stars
- Depression
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)

Signs:

- Loss of consciousness
- Blurred vision
- Difficulty concentrating
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Decreased playing ability
- Inability to perform daily activities
- Decrease attention span
- Difficulty with memory
- Sleeping problems/difficulty



Return to Sport Guidelines –

Return to play must follow a medically supervised stepwise process (based on International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Prague 2004)

- ✓ Complete rest until symptoms resolve
- ✓ Light aerobic exercise (e.g. stationary bike), no resistance training (i.e. lifting weights)
- ✓ Sport specific activities and training with no contact (e. g. skating)
- ✓ No body contact drills, return to resistance training (progress from moderate to heavy weights). Obtain medical clearance for next stage
- ✓ Drills and practice with body contact
- ✓ Return to full activity, no restrictions

Athletes should only progress through stages if there are no signs and symptoms showing up during or after completing the stage. These stages may take more than one day to complete. You should consult with a medical professional before returning to full activity.



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CONCUSSION GUIDELINES



Concussions –

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of head injury that can be caused by a direct or indirect hit to the head or body. Examples include: helmet-to-helmet contact, or a body check into the boards causing the head to be hit.

This type of trauma can cause a change in brain function, which can produce a variety of signs and symptoms.

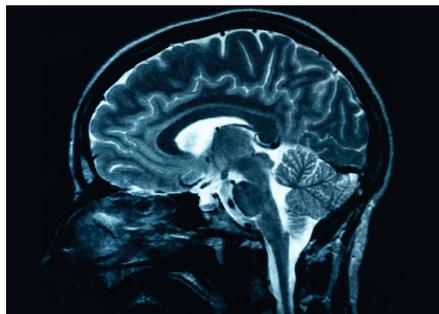
What happens when Concussions occur –

With a concussion the brain shakes or shifts, hitting the inside of the skull. These forces on the brain can result in acceleration-deceleration and/or rotational injuries.

With acceleration-deceleration type injuries the brain is forced forward and then immediately forced in another direction.

In rotational injuries the brain torques inside the skull.

Either of these injuries can disrupt the function of the nerve fibres in the brain resulting in a concussion.



How do Concussions occur–

Most concussions occur when an athlete comes into contact with another athlete or an object at a high rate of speed. Trauma can be either focal or diffuse in nature.

- Focal trauma is considered to be direct contact to a specific point on the head (baseball hitting the head).
- Diffuse trauma is considered trauma that is spread over a larger area of the head (head first into the boards).
- Adding a rotational component (taking a punch to the jaw and twisting the head) to either of these mechanisms can significantly increase the damage and increase the severity of the concussion.

Who to talk to –

After sustaining a suspected concussion it is important to seek medical assistance in order to have it assessed and treated appropriately.

Often athletes do not realize that they have suffered a concussion or they misinterpret their symptoms to other causes.

Signs and symptoms may not be present at the time of injury but may appear over the span of minutes or days.



What to do when a Concussion occurs –

Many athletes do not realize they are concussed. Usually another individual will notice changes in physical, mental, or cognitive changes in the athlete. If any symptoms are present the athlete should not return to play and must speak to a medical professional. When possible they should speak with someone who specializes in dealing with concussion management and return to sport protocol.

A frequent concern of players with concussions is the fear that they will lose their position or status on the team if they report concussions symptoms. Coaches need to reassure their athletes that this is not the case and that it is in the best interest of the athlete and team to report all signs and symptoms accurately.

Links –

Dr. Tom Pashby Sports Safety Fund
www.drpushby.ca

ImPACT Testing www.impacttest.com
www.impacttest.ca

ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada
www.thinkfirst.ca

Canadian Athletic Therapy Association
www.athletictherapy.org

Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine
www.casm-acms.org

Grand River Sports Medicine Center
www.grsm.ca

Disclaimer –

This pamphlet is intended for informational purposes only and should not replace proper medical advice.