

# CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

## Return to Activity Guidelines for Children & Youth

A concussion is a  
brain injury and must  
be taken seriously!



# Return to Activity Guidelines

These guidelines should be followed in discussion with a physician or brain injury clinician.

## STEP 1: No Activity and Complete Rest

- NO physical activity if symptomatic
- Which symptom group are you in: **BLUE**, **PURPLE**, or **GREEN**? →

*\*Get clearance from a physician or brain injury clinician before beginning STEP 2*

## STEP 2: Light Exercise

- NO resistance training or weight lifting
- **10-15 minutes** light exercise, maximum twice a day  
e.g., walking, stationary cycling, light jogging, freestyle swimming

## STEP 3: Individual Sport-Specific Activity

- NO body/head contact, spins, dives, jumps, high speed stops, hitting a baseball with a bat, or other jarring motions
- **20-30 minutes** general conditioning, maximum twice a day.  
e.g., skating, running, throwing

## STEP 4: Sport-Specific Practice with Team, NO CONTACT

- NO checking, heading the ball, tackling, live scrimmages
- Begin activities with one other teammate and then by the end of this step progress to full team practice, with NO contact.  
e.g., ball drills, shooting/passing drills, or other non-contact activities
- Begin resistance training and 'beginner level' sport-specific skills. Increase skill level over time.

*\*Get clearance from a physician or brain injury clinician before beginning STEPS 5 and 6*

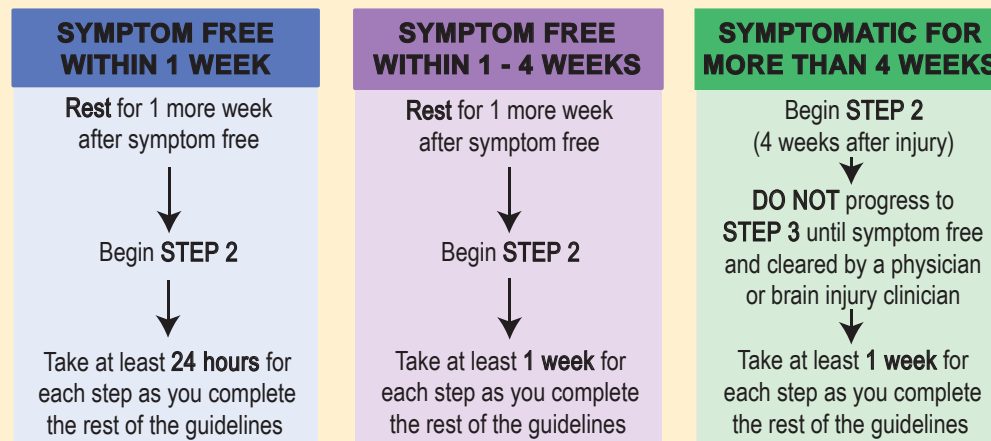
## STEP 5: Sport-Specific Practice with Team and CONTACT

- Participate in normal training activities. If symptom free, you are ready to return to competition!

## STEP 6: Return to Activity, Sport or Game Play

## Which group are you in?

Choose your symptom group and follow the instructions below.



**If symptoms return, rest for at least 24 hours and then go back to the previous step**

## Overriding Recommendations for Return to Contact Sport

- If positive neuroimaging findings → Take at least 3 months off from contact sport
- If 2 concussions in 3 months → Take 6 months off from the time of the most recent injury
- If 3 or more concussions in 1 year → Take 1 year off from the time of the most recent injury
- Discuss retirement from sport after 3 or more concussions, especially if symptoms are prolonged and affecting performance

***But continue to exercise!***

**Also see the McMaster Return to School Guidelines**

# Concussion Facts

The **biggest risk** is going back to play before the brain heals and getting another concussion!

Higher risk of prolonged recovery with:

- Multiple concussions
- History of learning or behaviour problems
- History of migraines
- Symptoms of amnesia, foginess or dizziness

Percentage of children who are symptom free in:

15 days=25%  
26 days=50%  
45 days=75%  
92 days=90%

**WHEN THEY'RE OKAY  
RETURN TO PLAY**



**WHEN IN DOUBT  
SIT THEM OUT**

For more information, please visit  
[www.canchild.ca](http://www.canchild.ca)



This project is funded by  
The Canadian Institutes of  
Health Research

## CONCUSSION

A concussion, also known as a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI), changes the way the brain functions. An MTBI can be caused by a direct or indirect hit, blow or force to the head or body.

## SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

- Sleep disturbances or drowsiness
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Poor balance or coordination
- Dizziness
- Visual problems
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Mentally foggy
- Difficulty concentrating/ remembering
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Nervousness

Symptoms should be evaluated daily to show healing and recovery

## RED FLAG SYMPTOMS

If any of the following symptoms develop, go to the emergency department/seek further investigation immediately:

- Increased drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- Headaches worsen or neck pain
- Persistent vomiting
- Pupils are unequal in size
- Seizures
- Confusion or short-term memory loss
- Blurred/double vision, slurred speech or loss of motor function
- Change in behaviour (irritability, agitation or aggression)