



Sport Related Concussion – Information Handout

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury. A concussion most often occurs without loss of consciousness. However, a concussion may involve loss of consciousness. Concussions are caused by the brain moving inside of the skull. The movement causes damage that changes how brain cells function, leading to symptoms that can be physical (headaches, dizziness), cognitive (problems remembering or concentrating), or emotional (feeling depressed).

The majority of people (80-90%) who experience concussion recover with no lingering symptoms.

How Concussions Happen?

Any impact (direct or indirect) to the head, face or neck or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jolting of the head and results in the brain moving inside the skull may cause a concussion.

Common Symptoms and Signs of a Concussion Symptoms:

Important note to parents and players:

Signs and symptoms may have a delayed onset (may be worse later that day, next morning, or even days later), so players should continue to be observed even after the initial symptoms and signs have returned to normal.

A player may show any one or more of these symptoms or signs.

Physical

Headache
Nausea
Vomiting
Blurred or double vision
Seeing stars
Poor balance
Dizziness
Poor co-ordination

Cognitive

Feeling "slowed down"
Difficulty concentrating
Feeling dazed
Memory problems
Unable to multi-task
Not yourself
Sleep disturbance

Behavioural

Frustration
Anger
Feeling down/depressed
Anxious
Sleeping more than usual
Difficulty falling asleep

The first 24-48 hrs after Concussion - REST

What should you do if concussion is suspected?

- Recognize and remove the player from the current game or practice.
- Do not leave the player alone, monitor symptoms and signs.
- Do not administer medication.
- Inform the coach, parent or guardian about the injury.
- The player should be evaluated by a medical doctor as soon as possible, within 24-72 hrs.
- The player must not return to play in that game or practice, and must follow the 6-step return to play strategy and receive medical clearance by a physician.



Okotoks Minor Hockey Association

"Practice and play like a champion today!"

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If you develop any of the following symptoms, go to the nearest Emergency Department:

- Stiff neck
- Fluid and/or blood leaking from nose or ears
- Difficulty waking up
- Difficulty remaining awake
- Fever
- Headache that gets worse, lasts a long time, or is not relieved by over-the-counter pain relievers
- Vomiting
- Problems walking and talking
- Problems thinking
- Seizures
- Changes in behaviour or unusual behaviour
- Double or Blurred vision
- Changes in speech (slurred, difficult to understand or does not make sense)

How is a Concussion Treated? How long does it take to get better?

Your physician and or other health care provider trained in concussion management will recommend a player should rest physically and mentally.

- Avoiding activities that increase any of the players symptoms, such as general physical exertion, sports, or any vigorous movements.
- This rest also includes limiting activities, which require thinking and mental concentration, such as playing video games, watching TV, school work, reading, texting, or using a computer, if these activities trigger players symptoms or worsen them.
- Symptoms and timelines may be very different from player to player, therefore ongoing concussion management and individualized rehabilitation plans are key in player Returning to Learn and Returning to Sport.
- Most recent research notes that most sport related concussions are resolved in less than two weeks in adults and less than 4 weeks in children.

Return to Learn

- Slowly returning to school is best. As a student, it can be hard for you to focus, remember and process information, which can affect how well a player learns and performs at school. Players and their school staff, including teachers and counselors, can work together to adjust players school work and school environment so a player can gradually return to full school activities and performance.
- A successful return to school must come before a return to play, but a return to physical activity may take place in parallel with a return to school.