



CONCUSSIONS

Things You Should Know!

WHAT IS IT? A Concussion is a brain injury. Any blow to the head, face, neck or to the body that causes a sudden shaking of the brain inside the skull may cause a Concussion. A Concussion can result from any number of activities including receiving a check in Hockey, falling from a jungle gym, being in a motor vehicle collision or slipping on a sidewalk. You do not need to lose consciousness to have had a Concussion.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

Signs Observed by Coaches

- Appears dazed or confused
- Confused about assignments
- Forgets sports plays
- Unsure of score in game
- Clumsy movement(s)
- Answers questions slowly
- Loss of consciousness
- Shows behavior changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit
- Can't recall events after hit

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or pressure in Head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

ACTION PLAN

If you suspect that a player has sustained a Concussion, you as the Coach, Assistant Coach or Trainer should take the following steps:

1. Remove athlete from Play.
2. Ensure athlete is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional. Do not try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself.
3. Inform athlete's parents or guardians about the known or possible Concussion and refer them to this document.
4. Allow athlete to return to play ONLY with permission from an appropriate health care professional.

RECOVERY & RETURN TO PLAY (RTP)

What can I do to help recover from my Concussion?

Since a Concussion is a form of traumatic brain injury it is important that you modify your lifestyle and activities to promote brain recovery, this includes:

- Getting adequate amounts of physical and mental rest
- Getting adequate amounts of sleep
- Getting adequate amounts of nutrition
- Keeping yourself well hydrated
- Avoiding activities that exacerbate concussion symptoms
- Avoiding stressful situations
- Strictly avoiding alcohol and recreational drugs
- Strictly avoiding situations that can put you at risk of future head injuries

How is a Concussion treated?

The most important treatment is REST, both physical and mental. Children should not play sports or participate in recreational activities even as simple as bike riding. Cognitive or mental rest includes limiting activities that require concentration, such as school, reading, texting, watching Television, computer work and electronic games.

Be patient healing takes time, only when symptoms have reduced significantly, in consultation with your Health Care Professional should you slowly return to regular activities. No two people are the same when it comes to head injuries whereas one person may be symptom free in 7-10 days it may take the next person months to fully recover.

When can I return to Sports?

No one should return to play or to vigorous activity while signs or symptoms of a Concussion are present. Return to sport should follow the 6 step RTP approach.

The Six Steps to Return to Play Include:

1. No activity, mental and physical rest until symptom free.
2. Light aerobic activity like walking or stationary cycling.
3. Sport specific activity like skating or running.
4. Training drills without body contact.
5. Training drills with body contact – **Only after physician clearance.**
6. Game Play

Each step in the RTP must take a minimum of one day. If symptoms return during this process, either with activity or later in the day, stop the activity and return to rest until the symptoms resolve before trying any activity again. A physician should be consulted if symptoms persist.

PA Hockey – COACH PROTOCOL

When PA Hockey Coaches are acting in good faith, following the guidelines above and acting in the best interest of their players they will receive full support of PA Hockey.

Unfortunately, from time to time we as Coaches, Managers or Board Members must protect our players from themselves or their Parents. There will be times when Players or Parents will want to get back to action before they are truly ready, this may put a Coach or team official in a compromising position. To avoid this, we suggest the following steps be followed to make things easier and manageable for our volunteer team personnel.

1. If you suspect a player has sustained a Concussion, refer the parents to this document and recommend they take their son/daughter to a Physician.
2. If a player on your team does go to a Physician, and is diagnosed with a Concussion, then that player **MUST** get clearance from a Physician before he/she is allowed to return.
3. If a player or parents of a player on your team refuse to cooperate, refer them to the PA Hockey Technical Director or any Board Member.

This protocol is in place to protect not only the players but our Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Managers and Safety personnel.