

In 2019 a consensus statement was released advising that all Canadian National level athletes should have annual baseline concussion testing.

Shouldn't all athletes be treated in the same way?

While some may say concussions are an inherent risk in playing contact sports, what is unacceptable is the number of poorly managed concussion injuries. Research has indicated a substantial risk for permanent brain damage in repeat concussion scenarios, especially in children.

The evidence continues to mount concerning the long-term effects related to repeat head trauma or concussions. What is more startling is that the repeat force to produce as much or more damage than the first concussion is in the 50% range!

A concussion is not a singular event. It is an injury, and it runs its course like any other injury. It can often take several days for the injury symptoms to peak before starting to resolve, and 80% recover in 2 weeks. Current recommendations include no same day return to activity after exhibiting concussion symptoms, but yet we still see this happen at all levels of sport.

In doing a risk analysis of this situation, what is very clear is that until recently, there were no objective measures to determine when a concussed athlete can return to his or her sport. The common sports medicine formula has often been based on subjective responses and symptom monitoring (but fortunately that is changing with more resources available to the average person, and better education for all involved).

Pre-season concussion testing is the only way to create personal baseline **objective** scores. The International Concussion in Sport Group at their international summits has indicated that neuropsychological baseline testing is the cornerstone to concussion management. Preseason testing also allows for education before a concussion occurs so that if a concussion does happen, the important 1st steps are initiated immediately.

Honsberger Physio+'s Baseline concussion testing program has been used by many sports team including many AMHA hockey teams over the years. We are also the official providers of baseline testing at Crestwood Prep School. We have been providing baseline testing and concussion management for over 20 years in a wide variety of sports.

Your child's team is also part of our testing family.

Return to play decisions, are now objectively based on repeat testing. Our program takes place in a manner to replicate the decision-making processes of sport as well as a physical demand test utilizing the Dynavision D2, fitLight, Neurotracker and PlayAttention systems. Not only does the program test visual motor reaction, it also assesses memory, concentration, cognitive function, executive function and

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even computational competency. A similar program is used at the University of Cincinnati for concussion testing on all their varsity athletes.

In addition, we have added a **new** component run by Cambridge Brain Sciences that is an online cognitive test that is performed at home to supplement our in-clinic testing and results are compared to a database of over 80 000 people. You (Your child) will be receiving an email link to complete this test and we ask that it be completed on the same day of testing (or next day at the latest). *If you do not receive this email please let us know as soon as possible.*

In clinic baseline testing takes 30 minutes. Individual baseline testing fees are \$75.00 while team / group pricing is \$65.00. All repeat testing to determine suitability to return to play is free. Baseline results are valid for approximately 1 year for those under 18 years of age, and annual testing is recommended due to brain growth and maturation changes.

If a concussion does occur, an individual has several choices:

1. Wait until symptoms subside and have a free repeat baseline concussion test to determine status and return to play protocol.
2. Attend Physiotherapy (\$115 Assessment and \$80 treatment sessions) to determine the main areas leading symptoms and commence a treatment program to help facilitate the recovery, as research shows that physiotherapy is helpful in concussion recovery. This is especially helpful in those who may be at a higher risk for a prolonged recovery. Repeat baseline tests are still free.

Why would any parent coach or administrator allow participation in contact sports without a sound concussion management strategy?

Awareness starts with education!

Professionally yours,



Efan Gonsalves PT
efan@honsbergerphysio.com
905-940-2627

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