



## PRE-SEASON CONCUSSION EDUCATION SHEET

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that can't be seen on x-rays, CT or MRI scans. It affects the way an athlete thinks and can cause a variety of symptoms.

### WHAT CAUSES A CONCUSSION?

Any blow to the head, face or neck, or somewhere else on the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion. Examples include getting body-checked in hockey or hitting one's head on the floor in gym class.

### WHEN SHOULD I SUSPECT A CONCUSSION?

A concussion should be suspected in any athlete who sustains a significant impact to the head, face, neck, or body and reports *ANY* symptoms or demonstrates *ANY* visual signs of a concussion. A concussion should also be suspected if an athlete reports *ANY* concussion symptoms to one of their peers, parents, teachers, or coaches or if anyone witnesses an athlete exhibiting *ANY* of the visual signs of concussion. Some athletes will develop symptoms immediately while others will develop delayed symptoms (beginning 24-48 hours after the injury).

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

A person does not need to be knocked out (lose consciousness) to have had a concussion. Common symptoms include:

- Headaches or head pressure
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Blurred or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Balance problems
- Feeling tired or having no energy
- Not thinking clearly
- Feeling slowed down
- Easily upset or angered
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Feeling more emotional
- Sleeping more or sleeping less
- Having a hard time falling asleep
- Difficulty working on a computer
- Difficulty reading
- Difficulty learning new information

### WHAT ARE THE VISUAL SIGNS OF A CONCUSSION?

Visual signs of a concussion may include:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion or inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant stare
- Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow labored movements
- Facial injury after head trauma
- Clutching head

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT A CONCUSSION?

If any athlete is suspected of sustaining a concussion during sports they should be immediately removed from play. Any athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion during sports must not be allowed to return to the same game or practice.

**It is important that ALL athletes with a suspected concussion undergo medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, as soon as possible. It is also important that ALL athletes with a suspected concussion receive written medical clearance from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to sport activities.**

**WHEN CAN THE ATHLETE RETURN TO SCHOOL AND SPORTS?**

It is important that all athletes diagnosed with a concussion follow a step-wise return to school and sports-related activities that includes the following Return-to-School and Return-to-Sport Strategies. It is important that youth and adult student-athletes return to full-time school activities before progressing to stage 5 and 6 of the Return-to-Sport Strategy.

**Return-to-School Strategy<sup>1</sup>**

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Daily activities at home that do not give the student-athlete symptoms	Typical activities during the day as long as they do not increase symptoms (i.e. reading, texting, screen time). Start at 5-15 minutes at a time and gradually build up.	Gradual return to typical activities.
2	School activities	Homework, reading or other cognitive activities outside of the classroom.	Increase tolerance to cognitive work.
3	Return to school part-time	Gradual introduction of schoolwork. May need to start with a partial school day or with increased breaks during the day.	Increase academic activities.
4	Return to school full-time	Gradually progress.	Return to full academic activities and catch up on missed school work.

**Sport-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy**

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Symptom-limiting activity	Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms	<b>Gradual re-introduction of work/school activities</b>
2	Light aerobic activity	Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance training	<b>Increase heart rate</b>
3	Sport-specific exercise	Low to moderate intensity individual running, throwing and outfield catching. No in-field, catching or pitcher position practice	<b>Add movement</b>
4	Non-contact training drills	High intensity running (including non-contact base running), throwing, out-field and in-field catching. Non-contact individual and team drills. Batting cage or taking	<b>Exercise, coordination and increased thinking</b>

		pitches from a coach. May start progressive resistance training. Individual catcher and pitching position practice	
5	Full contact practice	Following medical clearance High intensity full contact practice and scrimmage	<b>Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff</b>
6	Return to sport	Normal game play	

**HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR THE ATHLETE TO RECOVER?**

Most athletes who sustain a concussion will make a complete recovery within 1-2 weeks while most youth athletes will recover within 1-4 weeks. Approximately 15-30% of patients will experience persistent symptoms (>2 weeks for adults; >4 weeks for youth) that may require additional medical assessment and management.

**HOW CAN I HELP PREVENT CONCUSSIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES?**

Concussion prevention, recognition and management require athletes to follow the rules and regulations of their sport, respect their opponents, avoid head contact, and report suspected concussions.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONCUSSIONS PLEASE VISIT:**

Parachute Canada: [www.parachutecanada.org/concussion](http://www.parachutecanada.org/concussion)

**SIGNATURES (OPTIONAL):** The following signatures certify that the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian have reviewed the above information related to concussion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of athlete

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of athlete

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date