

Concussion Handout

Facts:

- **ALL** concussions are brain injuries.
- **ALL** concussions are serious.
- Symptoms may not appear right away.
- Every concussion is different.
- Concussions can occur without loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur in ANY sport or recreational activity.
- Recognition and management when concussions first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.
- Sports such as hockey, football, pole vaulting, equestrian, rugby and soccer have significantly higher incidence of concussions than other sports.
- A concussion is an invisible injury.






What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a hit to the head, neck, or face or a jolt to the body, causing functional changes within the brain. A concussion is suspected when the individual sustains a ‘hit’ and exhibits **one or more** of the signs and symptoms listed in the table below.

Situations where concussions can occur:

- A collision where there is a **blow to the head**:
 - E.g. Two athletes colliding; one athlete strikes a wall, boards, or goalpost
 - E.g. By a piece of equipment (i.e., ball or stick)
- A collision where there is a **blow to the body** that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull:
 - E.g. A very hard tackle with a sudden rapid jerking or twisting of the neck (whiplash)
- **Scrum** -where an athlete at the bottom of a pile may have received an elbow/kick to the head
- From a **fall**
 - E.g. A fall from a moving bike, being pushed to the ground

Symptoms that athlete’s report:

 Physical	 Cognitive (Thinking/Remembering)	 Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Dizziness • Nausea or vomiting • Feeling unsteady • Double vision • Feeling “stunned” or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion • Disorientation • Poor concentration • Memory disturbance • Balance troubles • Difficulty remembering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling depressed • Moodiness • Irritability • Nervousness or anxiety • Sadness • Drowsiness

<p>“dazed”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitivity to light or noise • Ringing in the ears • Numbness/tingling • Feeling tired/ lack of energy • Balance problems 	<p>events after event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty remembering events before event • Sleep disturbance (sleeping more or less than usual, trouble falling asleep) • Difficulty thinking clearly • Answers questions more slowly or repeatedly • Feeling slowed down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emotional
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Signs to look for as a coach/parent/guardian	Signs to look for as a teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vomiting • Poor coordination or balance • Loss of consciousness or impaired consciousness • Personality or behaviour changes • Glossy eyes • Poor concentration • Decreased performance • Slurred speech • Slowness answering questions and following directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased problems paying attention or concentrating • Increased problems remembering or learning new information • Longer time needed to complete tasks or assignments • Difficulty organizing tasks or shifting between tasks • Inappropriate or impulsive behaviour during class • Greater irritability • Less ability to cope with stress • More emotional than usual • Fatigue • Difficulties handling a stimulating school environment (lights, noise, etc.) • Physical symptoms (headache, nausea, dizziness)

Problems with returning to play too early:

- Can delay recovery from that injury
- Can put you at risk for repeated injuries
- Second Impact Syndrome: *condition in which the brain swells rapidly and catastrophically after a person suffers a second concussion before symptoms from an earlier one have subsided.*