

Concussion Information

***If you suspect a concussion, always have the young person seek medical attention.
Never attempt to treat a concussion without a physician's involvement.***

What Is a Concussion?

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a hit or jolt to the head or body. This movement can cause the brain to impact the inside of the skull and trigger swelling on parts of the brain. The swelling and pressure can affect brain function.

Symptoms and Signs of a Concussion

Often, the symptoms and signs of a concussion show up hours after the incident or even the next day, so make sure after any blow to the head or body that young people are observed for changes in healthy or behaviour.

It's important to note that a young person suffering from a concussion may show any one or more of these symptoms or signs:

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Signs</i>
Headache	Poor balance or coordination
Dizziness	Slow or slurred speech
Feeling dazed	Poor concentration
Seeing stars	Delayed responses to questions
Sensitivity to light	Vacant Stare
Ringing in ears	Unusual emotions
Fatigue	Personality changes
Nausea or vomiting	Inappropriate behaviour
Irritability	
Confusion or disorientation	

After an incident, if a young person loses consciousness, call an ambulance immediately!

Key Steps in Dealing with a Concussion

- Remove the young person from the activity
- Do **not** leave the young person alone, and always monitor their symptoms and signs
- Do **not** give the young person any medication
- Inform the parent or guardian as soon as possible
- Get the young person to a doctor as soon as possible
- Do **not** allow the young person to rejoin a game or activity

6 Steps to Return to Play

A concussion is a serious injury that requires a gradual reintroduction to activities monitored and with permission by a physician. Symptoms and signs can return at any time during this process. If they do, the young person must be re-evaluated by a physician. Remember that symptoms and signs can return later in the day or the next day after an injury.

Step 1: Complete physical and mental rest! Even reading, computer-time, or watching television should be minimized. The mind needs time to heal.

Step 2: Easy, light introduction to physical activity. Examples include walking or riding a stationary bike. Monitor the child or youth person for any symptoms or signs.

Step 3: Advancement to gentle sport-related training, e.g.; skating or stretching.

Step 4: The child or youth may rejoin the sport or activity, however without rough activity or body contact. Advancement to Step 5 may only take place after receiving medical clearance.

Step 5: The participant may begin more strenuous games or drills including body contact if that is part of the activity or sport.

Step 6: After a period of time at Step 5, if all has gone well, the child or youth can resume normal activity.

These six steps should take, at the shortest, a week. If any symptoms or signs of a concussion re-occur, you must return to Step 2 and have the young person re-evaluated by a doctor.

Never allow a young person to return to their activity if symptoms and signs of concussion persist! The long-term impact can be life-altering.

How Can I Help Keep Young People Safe?

- Help create a culture of safety in your activity.
- Ensure all young people follow safety rules and rules specific to the activity.
- Talk with other coaches and leaders and share ideas on how to reduce situations where a concussion may be sustained.
- Talk with participants about concussion and other injuries. Discuss concerns they may have about reporting injuries or suspected concussions. Is missing a game or practice worth potential long-term health issues? Emphasize the importance of allowing time to fully recover from any injury.
- If required for the sport or activity, make sure young people have properly fitting and certified equipment and helmets. Helmets cannot prevent concussions, so hits to the head must be avoided.
- Be the role model your youth need and let them know you expect them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

Final Note

Concussions are a serious, traumatic head injury. Young people who continue to play or return to activities before they have fully healed have a greater chance of getting a subsequent concussion injury. Subsequent or secondary concussion injuries while the brain continues healing from the first can be very serious and affect a young person for the rest of their life. Treat concussions with caution and care, and always follow the 6 Steps to Return to Play.

To learn more about concussions, visit:

[Making Head Way](#)

parachutecanada.org

cdc.gov/HEADSUP