

Concussion Overview by Dr. Goulet



Concussion symptoms

Concussion symptoms may include the following: headache, dizziness, feeling like in a fog, more emotions, tired, forgetful, balance issues, irritability, issues with sleep, vision problems, light sensitivity, hearing sensitivity. Note that this is a non-exhaustive list and additional information can be found on the Hockey Canada concussion card at www.hockeycanada.ca/concussion.

Suspected Concussion

If a concussion is suspected, the child must be pulled from the activity immediately and not returned to the activity that day. Athletes should be seen by a physician in a timely manner and should not return to play without being cleared by a physician. There is currently insufficient evidence that complete rest improves recovery. After a brief period of rest, players can gradually increase activity.

Being seen by a Physician

There are some possible treatments that can help prolonged cases. These should be overseen by a physician. Persistent symptoms can be caused by many other things (not just the head injury); this is another reason why a trained physician should be involved. Even after symptoms disappear, the brain may not be fully recovered. A prolonged period of "no risk physical activity" may be required even after symptoms resolve.

Need to Knows!

- Most concussions DON'T result in a loss of consciousness.
- You don't need to get hit in the head to have a concussion.
- "Return to Learn" protocol is an important part of the recovery process.
- Athletes should not be left alone after a head injury and should be monitored over the next few hours. **Symptoms may not be present right after the injury.**
- Concussions aren't visible on brain imaging (CT scan or MRI).
- More research is needed for helmet sensors, blood/genetic testing & most intensive therapies.
- Any activity should not make symptoms worse or put the child at any risk of getting reinjured.
- Athletes should complete a Return to Play Program when returning to sport.
- There is no accepted number of concussions that require retirement from sport. *Each case is individualized.*
- Baseline testing may be beneficial but is not required and needs to be done by a trained medical professional.
- No helmet has been shown to prevent concussions.
- The evidence for mouth guard use in preventing sport related concussion is mixed.