



# CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORTS

Canada Basketball and our Provincial/ Territorial Sport Organizations understand that having a concussion policy is crucial to the health and wellness of our young athletes. Through the amalgamation of concussion research completed by the Think First Foundation, the Concussion in Sport Group and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Canada Basketball recommends these return to play protocols before an athlete is allowed to return to both training and competition.

## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that is caused by a bump or blow to the head. It can change the way your brain normally works. It can occur during practices or games in any sport. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. A concussion can happen even if you haven’t been knocked out. You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

## RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOLS

*WHAT ARE THE STEPS THAT AN ATHLETE SHOULD TAKE IN ATTEMPTING TO RETURN TO SPORT AFTER A CONCUSSION:*

A concussion is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a step-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

**Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be immediately removed from play, and should not be returned to activity until they are assessed medically. Athlete with a suspected concussion should not be left alone and should not drive a motor vehicle.**

**PLEASE NOTE: For the 2015 Canada Basketball 15U and 17U National Championships, the following policy will be in effect: Any participant that is suspected of a concussion and in need of medical assessment, MUST provide a signed note from the doctor clearing that participant before being allowed to return to competitive game play.**



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Each step must take a minimum of one day but could last longer, depending on the player and his or her specific situation.

## **Step 1: No activity, only complete rest.**

Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone. Once symptoms are gone, a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step-wise return to play process.

## **Step 2: Light aerobic exercise.**

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The player should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

**If the athlete has symptoms:** Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

**If the athlete has no symptoms:** Proceed to Step 3 the next day.

## **Step 3: Sport specific activities.**

Activities such as stationary passing, dribbling or shooting can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high-speed stops.

**If the athlete has symptoms:** Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

**If the athlete has no symptoms:** Proceed to Step 4 the next day.

## **Step 4: Begin drills without body contact.**

**If the athlete has symptoms:** Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

**If the athlete has no symptoms:** The time needed to progress from non-contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the player. *Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance.*

## **Step 5: Begin drills with body contact.**

**If the athlete has symptoms:** Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

**If the athlete has no symptoms:** Proceed to Step 6 the next day.

## **Step 6: Game play.**



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## ATHLETES

### *WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?*

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light
- Bothered by noise
  
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Difficulty remembering
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Irritability
- Neck Pain
- Nervous or anxious
- Sadness
- Does not “feel right”

### *WHAT SHOULD AN ATHLETE DO IF THEY THINK THEY HAVE A CONCUSSION?*

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical check up.** A doctor or health care professional can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.
- **It is better to miss one game than the whole season.**

### *HOW CAN ATHLETES PREVENT A CONCUSSION?*

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times
- Use the proper equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
  - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
  - Worn correctly and fit well
  - Used every time you play



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- Repaired and maintained

## PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

*WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION OBSERVED BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS?*

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to being hit or falling
- Can't recall events after being hit or falling
- Appears more emotional



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## *HOW CAN A PARENT/ GUARDIAN HELP THEIR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION:*

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

## *WHAT SHOULD A PARENT/GUARDIAN DO IF THEY THINK THEIR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?*

1. Seek medical attention right away. A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports. Notify your child's coach if you think your child has a concussion.
2. Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon – while the brain is still healing – risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
3. Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion in ANY sport or activity. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach