



**RCDSB**  
Renfrew County  
District School Board

## Concussion Guide for Parents

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.



### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of 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.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

#### Signs Observed by Parents or 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 hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

#### Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

### HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from injuries, such as 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 YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR 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.
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. Repeat 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 and school about any recent concussion. Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.



## When Can my Child Return to Sport?

**STEP 1)** No activity, complete rest. Once back to normal and cleared by a doctor go to **STEP 2**.

**STEP 2)** Light exercise such as walking or stationary cycling, for 10-15 minutes.

**STEP 3)** Sport specific aerobic activity (ie. skating in hockey, running in soccer), for 20 to 30 minutes. **NO CONTACT**.

**STEP 4)** 'On field' practice such as ball drills, shooting drills and other activities with **NO CONTACT** (ie. no checking, no heading the ball, etc.)

**STEP 5)** 'On field' practice with body contact, once cleared by a doctor.

**STEP 6)** Game play.

**Note:** Each step must take a minimum of one day. If your child has any symptoms of a concussion (e.g. headache, feeling sick to his/her stomach) that come back at any step, **STOP** activity, wait 24 to 48 hours



## How is a Concussion Treated? THE MOST IMPORTANT TREATMENT FOR A CONCUSSION IS REST.

Any child with concussion symptoms should be at home resting. Cognitive rest includes limiting activities requiring concentration and attention (e.g., tests, written assignments, reading, texting, television, computer, video/electronic games). Physical rest includes restricting recreational/leisure activities such as biking, play wrestling and competitive physical activities. If your child goes back to activities before they are completely better, they are more likely to get worse, and have symptoms longer. Even though it is very hard for an active child to rest, this is the most important step. Your school is able to support your child's healing when we work as partners. For an effective Return to Learn/Physical Activity, please ensure you return the completed **C-2 Form Documentation of Medical Examination**. As your child progresses, using the **C-3 Form Documentation for a Diagnosed Concussion – Return to Learn/Return to Physical Activity Plan** will support the plan.

## When should I take my child to the doctor?

Every child who gets a head injury should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible. Your child should go back to the doctor **IMMEDIATELY** if, after being told he/she has a concussion, he/she has worsening of symptoms such as:

1. Being more confused
2. Headache that is getting worse
3. Vomiting more than twice
4. Strange behaviour
5. Not waking up
6. Having any trouble walking
7. Having a seizure

Problems caused by a head injury can get worse later that day or night. The child should not be left alone and should be checked throughout the night. If you have any concerns about the child's breathing or how they are sleeping, wake them up. Otherwise, let them sleep. If they seem to be getting worse, you should see your doctor immediately.

**NO CHILD SHOULD GO BACK TO SPORT UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN CLEARED TO DO SO BY A DOCTOR.**

