

CONCUSSION AWARENESS

Definition:

A Change in mental status resulting from an external force.

Mechanism:

Direct blow to the head, face, jaw or 'Whiplash' effect.

A person does not need to lose consciousness to have a concussion!

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Symptoms are often subtle.

- Slow to answer questions or follow directions, poor concentration
- Feeling “dinged” or stunned, “bell rung”
- General confusion
- Nausea, vomiting
- Poor coordination or balance
- Inappropriate playing behavior (e.g. skating or running the wrong direction)
- Memory or orientation problems
- Headache, dizziness
- Changes in vision
- Emotional and personality changes

PREVENTION - Reduce the risk of brain injury:

- 1) Appropriate protective equipment should be worn properly, and replaced when damaged. Approved helmets should be worn in all collision sports or activities with a risk of head trauma.
- 2) Adhere to the rules of the sport or activity. Play fair and play smart!
- 3) Respect all participants.



For more information, please contact BIANS at:

(902) 473-7301 or
bians1@ns.sympatico.ca
www3.ns.sympatico.ca/bians1

These guidelines have been adapted from the Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine, Guidelines for the Assessment and Management of Sport-Related Concussion, May 2000.

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Returning to an activity while still symptomatic is very dangerous.

When in doubt, sit them out!

When a person shows ANY symptoms or signs:

1. The person **should not be allowed to return to play** in the current activity, game or practice.
2. The person should not be left alone. Regular monitoring for deterioration is essential.
3. The person must be evaluated by a medical doctor.
4. Return to play must follow a physician-supervised **STEPWISE** process.

STEPWISE PROCESS

Medical attention is always advised before any return to play. Physician-supervised concussion management should adhere to the following steps:

Proceed to the next step if symptom free. If symptoms occur, drop back a step to where there are no symptoms, and try to progress again.	
Step 1	No activity, complete rest.
Step 2	Light exercise such as walking or stationary cycling.
Step 3	Sport-specific activity (e.g. skating in hockey, running in soccer)
Step 4	Sport practice without body contact.
Step 5	Sport practice with body contact, once cleared to do so by a medical doctor. The time required to progress from full non-contact exercise to contact will vary with the severity of the concussion.
Step 6	Sport play or full activity.

SECOND IMPACT SYNDROME

Even a seemingly mild blow to the head when post-concussion symptoms are still present can lead to massive brain swelling. It has also been shown that multiple concussions can lead to irreversible changes such as memory loss and concentration problems.