

Pre-Season Concussion Education Sheet

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that can't be seen on x-rays, CT or MRI scans. It affects the way an athlete thinks and can cause a variety of symptoms.

WHAT CAUSES A CONCUSSION?

Any blow to the head, face or neck, or somewhere else on the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion. Examples include getting body-checked in hockey or hitting one's head on the floor in gym class.

WHEN SHOULD I SUSPECT A CONCUSSION?

A concussion should be suspected in any athlete who sustains a significant impact to the head, face, neck, or body and reports *ANY* symptoms or demonstrates *ANY* visual signs of a concussion. A concussion should also be suspected if an athlete reports *ANY* concussion symptoms to one of their peers, parents, teachers, or coaches or if anyone witnesses an athlete exhibiting *ANY* of the visual signs of concussion. Some athletes will develop symptoms immediately while others will develop delayed symptoms (beginning 24-48 hours after the injury).

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

A person does not need to be knocked out (lose consciousness) to have had a concussion. Common symptoms include:

- ▶ Headaches or head pressure
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Nausea and vomiting
- ▶ Blurred or fuzzy vision
- ▶ Sensitivity to light or sound
- ▶ Balance problems
- ▶ Feeling tired or having no energy
- ▶ Not thinking clearly
- ▶ Feeling slowed down
- ▶ Easily upset or angered
- ▶ Sadness
- ▶ Nervousness or anxiety
- ▶ Feeling more emotional
- ▶ Sleeping more or sleeping less
- ▶ Having a hard time falling asleep
- ▶ Difficulty working on a computer
- ▶ Difficulty reading
- ▶ Difficulty learning new information

WHAT ARE THE VISUAL SIGNS OF A CONCUSSION?

Visual signs of a concussion may include:

- ▶ Lying motionless on the playing surface
- ▶ Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- ▶ Disorientation or confusion or inability to respond appropriately to questions
- ▶ Blank or vacant stare
- ▶ Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow labored movements
- ▶ Facial injury after head trauma
- ▶ Clutching head

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT A CONCUSSION?

If any athlete is suspected of sustaining a concussion during sports they should be immediately removed from play. Any athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion during sports must not be allowed to return to the same game or practice.

It is important that ALL athletes with a suspected concussion undergo medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, as soon as possible. It is also important that ALL athletes with a suspected concussion receive written medical clearance from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to sport activities.