

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT & RETURN TO PLAY

The Hockey Development Centre for Ontario (HDCO) and its Members follow the 6-Step method for Return to Play for Concussion in sport that is endorsed by Hockey Canada (NSO).

Concussion Management

In all cases of a concussion the player must be removed from the activity. The player must not be left alone and signs and symptoms should be monitored. Do not administer medication. The player should not drive a motor vehicle. The coach, parent or guardian should be informed about the injury. The player must be referred to a medical doctor for assessment, diagnosis and guidance as well as return to play decisions. When a potential concussion has occurred the team Trainer will evaluate the player in question, using appropriate protocols and will make a determination based on their assessment of the player. If the Trainer determines that the player may be concussed or is showing symptoms of a possible concussion then they will deem that player unfit to play until assessed by a Physician. All players must consult a physician when a concussion is suspected.

Coaches, trainers, players and parents should not attempt to treat a concussion or a suspected concussion without a physician's involvement. The player must not return to play in that game or practice and must have a physician's approval in writing prior to return to play.

6 Step Return to Play Process

The return to play process is gradual, and begins after a doctor has given the player clearance to return to activity. If any symptoms/signs return during this process, the player must be re-evaluated by a physician. No return to play if any symptoms or signs persist. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, and not necessarily when exercising!

Step 1: No activity, only complete mental and physical rest. Proceed to step 2 only when all symptoms are gone. This includes avoiding both mental and physical stress.

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling. Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting.

Step 3: Sport specific activities and training (e.g. skating).

Step 4: Drills without body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights. The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and the player.

Only go to step 5 after medical clearance. (Physician Reassessment and Note)

Step 5: Begin drills with body contact.

Step 6: Game play. (The earliest a concussed athlete should return to play is one week).

Note: Players should proceed through return to play steps only when they do not experience symptoms or signs and the physician has given clearance. Each step should be a minimum of one day. If symptoms or signs return, the player should return to step 1, and be re-evaluated by a physician.

Never return to play if symptoms persist!