

DSSC Concussion Protocol

prepared September 2018

1. DSSC Position Statement

An athlete with a suspected concussion will be IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM SPORT. It is critical that they be examined by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. The athlete is not permitted to return to training, practice or competition until a clearance note for return to sport is produced from a Medical Doctor.

Athletes with a suspected concussion should not be left alone, should not drive and should not return to physical activities on the same day.

2. What is a concussion?

A concussion:

- is a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g., headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioural (e.g., depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);
- may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull; • can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness); and,
- cannot normally be seen on X-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs. (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2018)

3. Concussion Signs and Symptoms

Refer to the attachment on page 2 titled: “Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport - Concussion Guidelines”

4. Concussion Management

The first step in concussion management is complete mental and physical rest. Gradual return to routine mental activities (eg. School) and physical activities (eg. Sport) occurs in a step-by-step process and is unique to each athlete. This process should be medically supervised.

Refer to the attachment on page 3: “Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport - Concussion Guidelines” continued

5. References

www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/concussions/docs/mtcs_concussion_guide_en.pdf

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – Concussion Guidelines*

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION:

Following a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head, a concussion should be suspected in the presence of any one or more of the following signs or symptoms:

Possible Signs Observed <i>A sign is something that will be observed by another person (e.g., parent/guardian, teacher, coach, supervisor, peer).</i>	Possible Symptoms Reported <i>A symptom is something the student will feel/report.</i>
<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vomiting • slurred speech • slowed reaction time • poor coordination or balance • blank stare/glassy-eyed/dazed or vacant look • decreased playing ability • loss of consciousness or lack of responsiveness • lying motionless on the ground or slow to get up • amnesia • seizure or convulsion • grabbing or clutching of head <p>Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty concentrating • easily distracted • general confusion • cannot remember things that happened before and after the injury • does not know time, date, place, class, type of activity in which he/she was participating • slowed reaction time (e.g., answering questions or following directions) <p>Emotional/Behavioural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strange or inappropriate emotions (e.g., laughing, crying, getting angry easily) <p>Sleep Disturbance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drowsiness • insomnia 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • headache • pressure in head • neck pain • feeling off/not right • ringing in the ears • seeing double or blurry/loss of vision • seeing stars, flashing lights • pain at physical site of injury • nausea/stomach ache/pain • balance problems or dizziness • fatigue or feeling tired • sensitivity to light or noise <p>Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficulty concentrating or remembering • slowed down, fatigue or low energy • dazed or in a fog <p>Emotional/Behavioural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • irritable, sad, more emotional than usual • nervous, anxious, depressed <p>Sleep Disturbance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drowsy • sleeping more/less than usual • difficulty falling asleep

Additional Information:

- Signs/symptoms can appear right after the injury, or may appear within hours or days of the injury.
- The signs/symptoms may be different for everyone.
- An individual may be reluctant to report symptoms because of a fear that they will be removed from the activity, or their status on a team or in a game could be jeopardized.
- It may be difficult for younger children (under the age of 10) and those with special needs or where English/French is not their first language to communicate how they are feeling.
- Signs for younger children (under the age of 10) may not be as obvious as in older children/adults.

*These Informational Guidelines have been prepared for general informational purposes only. They are not intended to and do not constitute any medical advice and do not contain any medical diagnoses, symptom assessments or medical opinions.

RETURN TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (R2P) (following a diagnosed concussion):

A participant with a diagnosed concussion follows a medically supervised and individualized gradual Return to Physical Activity (R2P) plan.

It is critical to recovery that the individualized R2P plan be developed through a collaborative team approach. This team should include:

- the concussed individual
- her/his parents/guardians (if applicable)
- his/her coach, administrator and/supervisor
- school staff, including teachers, coaches etc. (if applicable)
- a medical doctor or nurse practitioner

Ongoing communication and monitoring by all members of the team will be essential to successful recovery.

Note – Children/Youth Under the Age of 18

If the concussed participant is under the age of 18 and currently attending a publicly funded elementary/high

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – Concussion Guidelines*

Additional Information:

- The most important treatment for concussion is rest (i.e., cognitive and physical).
- A child/youth does not attend school during **R2P – Step 1**.

Note

In order to proceed to **R2P – Step 2**, the concussed individual or parent/guardian (if applicable) must report back to his/her coach, administrator and/or supervisor that he/she is symptom free.

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R2P – Step 2

Activity: Individual light aerobic exercise only (e.g., walking or stationary cycling).

Restrictions: No resistance/weight training. No competition (including practices, scrimmages). No participation with equipment or with other participants. No drills. No body contact.

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Note

In order to proceed to **R2P – Step 3**, the concussed individual or parent/guardian (if applicable) must report back to his/her coach, administrator and/or supervisor that he/she is symptom free.

R2P – Step 3

Activity: Individual sport specific exercise only (e.g. running, skating, shooting).

Restrictions: No resistance/weight training. No competition (including practices, scrimmages). No body contact, no head impact activities (e.g., heading a ball in soccer), or other jarring motions (e.g., high speed stops, hitting a baseball with a bat).

R2P – Step 4

Activity: Activities where there is no body contact (e.g., dance, badminton, volleyball). Light resistance/weight training. Non-contact practice and non-contact sport specific drills (e.g., ball drills, shooting drills).

Restrictions: No activities that involve body contact, head impact (e.g., heading the ball in soccer) or other jarring motions (e.g., high speed stops, hitting a baseball with a bat).

Note

Medical Clearance: In order for a concussed individual to move from R2P Step 4 to R2P Step 5 he/she must provide written documentation from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner to his/her coach, administrator and/or Supervisor. The documentation must indicate that the individual is symptom-free and able to return to full participation in physical activity before he/she can proceed to **R2P – Step 5**.

R2P – Step 5

Activity: Full participation in regular physical activities in non-contact sports. Full training/practices for contact sports.

Restrictions: No competition (e.g., games, meets, events) that involve body contact.

R2P – Step 6 (Contact Sports only)

Activity: Full participation in all physical activities, including contact sports.

Restrictions: None.

Additional Information:

- Physical activities can cause concussion symptoms to reappear.
- Steps are not days – each step must take a minimum of 24 hours and the length of time needed to complete each step will vary based on the severity of the concussion.
- The concussed individual should be regularly monitored regularly for the return of any signs and/or symptoms of concussion.
 - If signs and/or symptoms return, consult with the medical doctor and/or nurse practitioner.

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