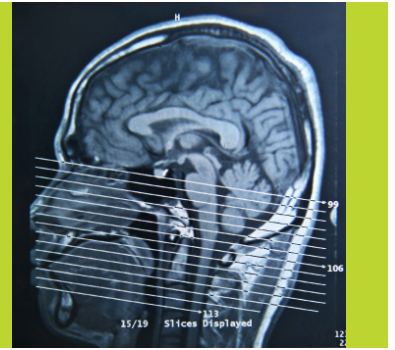


# Concussion Guidelines for TEACHERS



## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way a person may think and remember things, and can cause a variety of symptoms.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF CONCUSSION?

A STUDENT DOES NOT NEED TO BE KNOCKED OUT (LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS) TO HAVE HAD A CONCUSSION.

THINKING PROBLEMS	STUDENT'S COMPLAINTS	OTHER PROBLEMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not know time, date, place, period of game, opposing team, score of game</li> <li>• General confusion</li> <li>• Cannot remember things that happened before and after the injury</li> <li>• Knocked out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Feels dazed</li> <li>• Feels "dinged" or stunned; "having my bell rung"</li> <li>• Sees stars, flashing lights</li> <li>• Ringing in the ears</li> <li>• Sleepiness</li> <li>• Loss of vision</li> <li>• Sees double or blurry</li> <li>• Stomachache, stomach pain, nausea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor coordination or balance</li> <li>• Blank stare/glassy eyed</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> <li>• Slurred speech</li> <li>• Slow to answer questions or follow directions</li> <li>• Easily distracted</li> <li>• Poor concentration</li> <li>• Strange or inappropriate emotions (ie. laughing, crying, getting mad easily)</li> <li>• Not playing as well</li> </ul>

## WHAT CAUSES A CONCUSSION?

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## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CONCUSSION IN A STUDENT?

It is important to know how to deal with a student whom you suspect has sustained a concussion while participating in a sport or activity at school. **IF YOU SUSPECT A CONCUSSION, THE STUDENT SHOULD STOP PLAYING THE SPORT OR ACTIVITY RIGHT AWAY.** He/she should not be left alone and should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible that day. If a student is knocked out for more than a minute, call an ambulance to take him/her to a hospital immediately. Do not move him/her or remove athletic equipment like a helmet; wait for paramedics to arrive. The [sport concussion recognition tool 5](#) (CRT5), can be used by anyone to help identify suspected concussion in children, youth, and adults.

This tool should be kept and used at the point of play: field, rink, school yard, etc. It is helpful in identifying how to recognize symptoms related to concussion, as well as when to remove an athlete from play. The signs and symptoms of concussion are covered, and the tool also provides memory function tests to use with athletes.

Anyone suspected of having sustained a concussion should not go back to play that day, even if he/she says he/she is feeling better. Problems caused by a head injury can get worse later that day or night. He/she should not return to activity until he/she has been seen by a doctor.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR THE STUDENT TO GET BETTER?

The signs and symptoms of a concussion often last for 10-14 days but may last much longer. In some cases, children may take many weeks or months to heal. If symptoms are persistent (e.g. more than 10–14 days in adults or more than 1 month in children), the individual should be referred to a healthcare professional who is an expert in the management of concussion. Having had previous concussions may increase the chance that a person may take longer to heal.

## HOW IS A CONCUSSION TREATED?

The general recommendation is a brief 24-48 hour period of rest followed by a gradual return to light cognitive and physical activities as tolerated by the student. It is important to remember to not push too hard, and only indulge in those activities that do not worsen symptoms while progressing through the stages of recovery.

Many students find that attending school aggravates their symptoms, and may have to stay home and rest. It is not possible to know when symptoms will improve, as each concussion is unique. Therefore, a specific return date to school may not initially be possible for the student, their parents, or doctor to provide. Once they feel better, they can try going back to school, initially part time (e.g. half days at first) and, if their symptoms do not return, full time. Remember that mental exertion can make symptoms worse, so the student's workload may need to be adjusted accordingly.

It is very important that a student does not engage in any activity that worsens the symptoms. [PARACHUTE'S RETURN TO LEARN PROTOCOL](#) is an easy to use tool that can help you understand the various stages of the progression in returning to school safety.

Return to sport and activity must follow a step-wise approach:

**STEP 1)** After an initial short period of rest of 24-48 hours, light cognitive and physical activity can be initiated as long as they don't worsen symptoms. A physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step-wise [return to learn](#) and play strategy.

**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 about 20-30 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.

There should be at least 24 hours (or longer) for each step of the progression. If any symptoms worsen during exercise, you should go back to the previous step. Resistance training should be added only in the later stages (Step 4 or 5 at the earliest). If symptoms are persistent (e.g, more than 10–14 days in adults or more than 1 month in children), the athlete should be referred to a healthcare professional who is an expert in the management of concussion.

## WHEN CAN A STUDENT WITH A CONCUSSION RETURN TO SPORT?

It is very important that a student not play any sports, including P.E. class activities. When he/she has been seen by a doctor, he/she can then go through the steps of increasing activity described above. When the student has progressed through these steps with no symptoms or problems, and has received clearance from a doctor, he/she may return to play.

To learn more visit [www.parachutecanada.org/concussion](http://www.parachutecanada.org/concussion)

### RESOURCES

Return to Learn Protocol - <http://horizon.parachutecanada.org/en/article/parachutes-return-to-learn-protocol/>