

## Parents Concussion Summary

### What is a concussion?

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

### What causes a concussion?

Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion.

### What are the symptoms and signs of concussion?

**A child does not need to be knocked out (lose consciousness) to have had a concussion**

### Thinking problems that the child may experience:

- Does not know time, date, place, period of game, opposing team, or the score in the game
- General confusion
- Cannot remember things that happened before and/or after the injury
- Seems slow to answer questions or follow directions
- Seems easily distracted
- Not playing as well as expected
- A blank stare/glassy eyed, "the lights are on but nobody is at home"

### Things that the child may complain of or you see:

- Knocked out
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Feel dazed, "dinged" or stunned;
- Loss of vision, seeing double or blurred, seeing stars or flashing lights
- Ringing in the ears
- Sleepiness
- Stomach ache, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting
- Poor coordination or balance
- Slurred speech
- Poor concentration
- Strange or inappropriate emotions (i.e. laughing, crying, getting angry easily)
- Feeling generally unwell

## What should you do if **SUSPECT** concussion in your child?

**YOU should stop them playing right away.**

Continuing to play increases their risk of more severe, longer lasting concussion symptoms, as well as increases their risk of other injury:

- You should tell the referee, your coach, or other responsible person that you are concerned they have had a concussion
- You should not let them return to play that day
- You should not leave them alone
- You should have them seen by a doctor as soon as possible that day

## How is a concussion treated?

Concussion symptoms are made worse by exertion, both physical and mental. The most important treatment for a **concussion is REST**:

- The child should not exercise or do any activities that may make them worse, like, reading, working on the computer or playing video games
- If mental activities (eg: reading, concentrating, using the computer) worsen their symptoms, they may have to stay home from college or school
- If they go back to activities before they are completely better, they are more likely to get worse, and to have symptoms last longer

Once they are **RECOVERed**, and cleared to do so by a doctor they can start a step-wise increase in activities (see following section "When can a concussed player return to rugby?") If possible, they should be seen by a doctor with experience in treating concussions.

## Can it be anything more serious?

Anyone who gets a head injury should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible to have a diagnosis made. The doctor will usually give instructions to them to go back to them or go to hospital **IMMEDIATELY** if they have worsening of symptoms such as:

- Drowsiness when normally awake or cannot be awoken
- A headache that is getting worse
- Weakness, numbness or decreases coordination
- Repeated vomiting or prolonged nausea
- Slurred speech, difficulty speaking or understanding
- Increasing confusion, restlessness or agitation
- Loss of consciousness
- Convulsions or fits
- Clear fluid coming out of ears or nose
- Deafness in one or both ears

### When can a concussed player return to rugby?

It is very important that the child does not go back to rugby or any other sport, if they have any concussion symptoms or signs. Return to sport and activity must follow a step-wise Graduated Return to Play (GRTP) which can be downloaded in full from the resources section of [rfu.com/concussion](http://rfu.com/concussion)

**They should not go back to rugby/sport until they have been cleared to do so by a doctor**

### How long will it take to get better?

The signs and symptoms of a concussion often last for 7-10 days in adults but may last much longer, especially in younger players and children. In some cases, players may take many weeks or months to recover. Having had previous concussions may increase the chance that the person may take longer to recover.

### Remember the 4 R's:

**RECOGNISE**

**REMOVE**

**RECOVER**

**RETURN**

*These RFU Concussion resources have been developed based on the Zurich Guidelines published in the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport, and adapted for rugby by the International Rugby Board*

The information contained in this resource is intended for educational purposes only and is not meant to be a substitute for appropriate medical advice or care. If you believe that you or someone under your care has sustained a concussion we strongly recommend that you contact a qualified health care professional for appropriate diagnosis and treatment. The authors have made responsible efforts to include accurate and timely information. However they make no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy of the information contained and specifically disclaim any liability in connection with the content on this site.