



## Concussion Policy

For athletes under 18 year of age and their Parents/Guardians  
Items marked with an asterisk \* are mandatory by O.Reg. 161/19: General.

### Concussion Code of Conduct

#### I will help prevent concussions by:

- Wearing the proper equipment for my sport and wearing it correctly.
- Developing my skills and strength so that I can participate to the best of my ability.
- Respecting the rules of my sport or activity.
- My commitment to fair play and respect for all (respecting other athletes, coaches, team trainers and officials).

#### I will care for my health and safety by taking concussions seriously, and I understand that:

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short and long-term effects.
- A blow to my head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes the brain to move around inside the skull may cause a concussion.
- I don't need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- I have a commitment to concussion recognition and reporting, including self reporting of possible concussion and reporting to a designated person when an individual suspects that another individual may have sustained a concussion. (Meaning: If I think I might have a concussion I should stop participating in further training, practice, or competition immediately, or tell an adult if I think another athlete has a concussion).
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice or competition with a possible concussion increases my risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases my risk of other injuries.

#### I will not hide concussion symptoms. I will speak up for myself and others.

- I will not hide my symptoms. I will tell a coach, official, team trainer, parent or another adult I trust if I experience any symptoms of concussion.
- If someone else tells me about concussion symptoms, or I see signs they might have a concussion, I will tell a coach, official, team trainer, parent, or another adult I trust so they can help.
- I understand that if I have a suspected concussion, I will be removed from sport and that I will not be able to return to training, practice, or competition until I undergo a medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition.

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- I have a commitment to share any pertinent information regarding incidents of removal from sport with the athlete's school and any other sport organization with which the athlete has registered. (Meaning: If I am diagnosed with a concussion, I understand that letting all my other coaches and teachers know about my injury will help them support me while I recover.)

## Common Concussion Signs and Symptoms

***An athlete does not need to lose consciousness to have a concussion***

### Physical

- Headache
- Pressure in the head
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Ringing in the ears
- Balance problems
- Tired or low energy
- Drowsiness
- "Don't feel right"

### Sleep-related

- Sleeping more or less than usual
- Having a hard time falling asleep

### Cognitive (Thinking)

- Not thinking clearly
- Slower thinking
- Feeling confused
- Problems concentrating
- Problems remembering

### Emotional

- Irritability (easily upset or angered)
- Depression
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious

## **I will take the time I need to recover because it is important for my health.**

- I understand my commitment to supporting the return-to-sport process. (I will have to follow my sport organization's Return-to-Sport Protocol).
- I understand I will have to be medically cleared by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to training, practice, or competition.
- I will respect my coaches, team trainers, parents, health-care professionals, and medical doctors and nurse practitioners, regarding my health and safety.

## **I will help prevent concussions, through my:**

- Commitment to zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions.
- Acknowledgement of mandatory expulsion from competition for violating zero tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions. (Meaning: I will be disqualified/expelled from play if I violate the zero-tolerance policy).
- Acknowledgement of the escalating consequences for those who repeatedly violate the Concussion Code of Conduct.

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## Removal from Sport

A concussion should be suspected:

- In any athlete who sustains a significant impact to the head, face, neck, or body and demonstrates ANY of the visual signs of a suspected concussion or reports ANY of the symptoms of a suspected concussion as detailed in the above Concussion Code of Conduct.
- 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.

If an athlete demonstrates signs or symptoms of a more severe head or spine injury including convulsions, worsening headache, vomiting, or neck pain, a more severe head or spine injury should be suspected and emergency medical care should occur.

If an athlete is suspected of sustaining concussion and there is no concern for a more serious head or spine injury, the player should immediately cease all ski racing/training activity. They are required to be assessed by a medical professional and cannot return to sport until they have completed the return to sport protocol.

## Return to Sport

In order to return to sport the following criteria must be met:

- Athlete has undergone a medical clearance and has been determined to have not sustained a concussion.
- Athlete has been diagnosed with a concussion:
  - Has been medically cleared by a medical physician or nurse practitioner.
  - They have completed the 'Medical Clearance Letter' and it has been submitted to NBASR
  - Athletes may undergo a gradual return to sport as per Alpine Canada guidelines and level of activity must be included in the 'Medical Clearance Letter' completed.

Any athlete who has been cleared for return to sport, and who has a recurrence of symptoms, should immediately remove himself or herself from the activity and inform the coach. If the symptoms subside, the athlete may continue to participate in these activities as tolerated.



## Medical Assessment Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Athlete's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

To whom it may concern,

Athletes who sustain a suspected concussion should be managed according to the *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport*. Accordingly, I have personally completed a Medical Assessment on this patient.

### Results of Medical Assessment

- This patient has not been diagnosed with a concussion and can resume full participation in school, work, and sport activities without restriction.
- This patient has not been diagnosed with a concussion but the assessment led to the following diagnosis and recommendations:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- This patient has been diagnosed with a concussion.

The goal of concussion management is to allow complete recovery of the patient's concussion by promoting a safe and gradual return to school and sport activities. The patient has been instructed to avoid all recreational and organized sports or activities that could potentially place them at risk of another concussion or head injury. Starting on \_\_\_\_\_ (date), I would ask that the patient be allowed to participate in school and low-risk physical activities as tolerated and only at a level that does not bring on or worsen their concussion symptoms. The above patient should not return to any full contact practices or games until the coach has been provided with a *Medical Clearance Letter* provided by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner in accordance with the *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport*.

Other comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank-you very much in advance for your understanding.

Yours Sincerely,

Signature/print \_\_\_\_\_ M.D. / N.P. (circle appropriate designation)\*

*\*In rural or northern regions, the Medical Assessment Letter may be completed by a nurse with pre-arranged access to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. Forms completed by other licensed healthcare professionals should not otherwise be accepted.*

**We recommend that this document be provided to the athlete without charge.**



## Medical Clearance Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Athlete's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

To whom it may concern,

Athletes who are diagnosed with a concussion should be managed according to the *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport* including the *Return-to-School* and *Return-to-Sport Strategies* (see page 2 of this letter). Accordingly, the above athlete has been medically cleared to participate in the following activities as tolerated effective the date stated above (please check all that apply):

- Symptom-limiting activity (cognitive and physical activities that don't provoke symptoms)**
- Light aerobic activity (Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance training)**
- Sport-specific exercise (Running or skating drills. No head impact activities)**
- Non-contact practice (Harder training drills, e.g. passing drills. May start progressive resistance training. Including gym class activities without a risk of contact, e.g. tennis, running, swimming)**
- Full-contact practice (Including gym class activities with risk of contact and head impact, e.g. soccer, dodgeball, basketball)**
- Full game play**

**What if symptoms recur?** Any athlete who has been cleared for physical activities, gym class or non-contact practice, and who has a recurrence of symptoms, should immediately remove himself or herself from the activity and inform the teacher or coach. If the symptoms subside, the athlete may continue to participate in these activities as tolerated.

Athletes who have been cleared for full contact practice or game play must be able to participate in full-time school (or normal cognitive activity) as well as high intensity resistance and endurance exercise (including non-contact practice) without symptom recurrence. Any athlete who has been cleared for full-contact practice or full game play and has a recurrence of symptoms, should immediately remove himself or herself from play, inform their teacher or coach, and undergo medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to full-contact practice or games.

Any athlete who returns to practices or games and sustains a new suspected concussion should be managed according to the *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport*.

Other comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thank-you very much in advance for your understanding.  
Yours Sincerely,

Signature/print \_\_\_\_\_ M.D. / N.P. (circle appropriate designation)\*

*\*In rural or northern regions, the Medical Clearance Letter may be completed by a nurse with pre-arranged access to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. Forms completed by other licensed healthcare professionals should not otherwise be accepted.*

**We recommend that this document be provided to the athlete without charge.**



### Return-to-School Strategy<sup>1</sup>

The following is an outline of the *Return-to-School Strategy* that should be used to help student-athletes, parents, and teachers to partner in allowing the athlete to make a gradual return to school activities. Depending on the severity and type of the symptoms present, student-athletes will progress through the following stages at different rates. If the student-athlete experiences new symptoms or worsening symptoms at any stage, they should go back to the previous stage.

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Daily activities at home that do not give the student-athlete symptoms	Typical activities during the day as long as they do not increase symptoms (i.e. reading, texting, screen time). Start at 5-15 minutes at a time and gradually build up.	Gradual return to typical activities.
2	School activities	Homework, reading or other cognitive activities outside of the classroom.	Increase tolerance to cognitive work.
3	Return to school part-time	Gradual introduction of schoolwork. May need to start with a partial school day or with increased breaks during the day.	Increase academic activities.
4	Return to school full-time	Gradually progress.	Return to full academic activities and catch up on missed school work.

### Sport-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy<sup>1</sup>

The following is an outline of the *Return-to-Sport Strategy* that should be used to help athletes, coaches, trainers, and medical professionals to partner in allowing the athlete to make a gradual return to sport activities. Activities should be tailored to create a sport-specific strategy that helps the athlete return to their respective sport.

An initial period of 24-48 hours of rest is recommended before starting their *Sport-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy*. If the athlete experiences new symptoms or worsening symptoms at any stage, they should go back to the previous stage. It is important that youth and adult student-athletes return to full-time school activities before progressing to stage 5 and 6 of the *Sport-Specific Return-to-Sport Strategy*. It is also important that all athletes provide their coach with a *Medical Clearance Letter* prior to returning to full contact sport activities.

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Symptom-limiting activity	Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms.	Gradual re-introduction of work/school activities.
2	Light aerobic activity	Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance training.	Increase heart rate.
3	Sport-specific exercise	Running/ dryland drills. No head impact activities - Moderate intensity jogging for 30-60 minutes at sub-symptom threshold intensity - Low intensity freeskiing max 60 mins on snow time. - No head impact	Add movement.



4	Non-contact training drills	Harder training drills, e.g. passing drills. May start progressive resistance training.	Exercise, coordination and increased thinking.
5	Full contact practice	Following medical clearance and complete return to school. <i>- Participation in full training without activity restriction</i>	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff.
6	Return to sport	Normal competition.	

<sup>1</sup>Source: McCrory et al. (2017). Consensus statement on concussion in sport – the 5<sup>th</sup> international conference on concussion in sport held in Berlin, October 2016. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 51(11), 838-847.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2017-097699>