



2019 Concussion Management Program

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A sports concussion management program must be incorporated within each affiliate. All USA Hockey programs should follow this protocol as a minimum standard and also conform to their individual state concussion statutes.

Accepted current medical practice and the law in most states requires that any athlete with a suspected Sports Related Concussion (SRC) is immediately removed from play.

- A Sports Related Concussion is a traumatic brain injury- ***there is no such thing as a minor brain injury.***
- A player does not have to be “knocked-out” to have a SRC- ***less than 10% of players actually lose consciousness.***
- A SRC can result from a blow to head, neck ***or body.***
- SRCs often occur to players who don’t have or just released the puck, from open-ice hits, unanticipated hits and illegal collisions.
- The **young** hockey player’s brain is ***more susceptible*** to SRC.
- SRC in a young athlete may be ***harder*** to diagnosis, takes ***longer*** to recover, and is ***more likely*** to have a recurrence, which can be associated with serious long-term effects.
- The strongest predictor of slower recovery from a concussion is the severity of ***initial symptoms in the first day or 2*** after the injury.
- Treatment is individualized and it is impossible to predict when the athlete will be allowed to return to play- ***there is no standard timetable.***
- Baseline or pre-season **neuropsychological testing** is not mandatory, but may be helpful for return-to-play decision making when an athlete feels normal.
- The use of helmet-based or other **sensor systems** to diagnose or assess SRC require further research before implementation.

A player with ***any symptoms/signs*** or a ***worrisome mechanism of injury*** has a SRC until proven otherwise:

“When in doubt, sit them out”

Follow these concussion management steps:

1. Remove immediately from play (training, practice or game)
2. Inform the player's coach/parents or guardians
3. Refer the athlete to a qualified health-care professional (as defined in state statute)
4. Initial treatment requires physical and cognitive rest
5. Begin a graded return to sport and school/work protocol
6. Provide written medical clearance for return to play (the ***USA Hockey Return to Play Form*** is required)

Diagnosis

Players, coaches, officials, parents and health care providers should be able to recognize the symptoms/signs of a sport related concussion. (See attached ***Concussion Recognition Tool 5***)

Symptoms:

- Headache
- “Pressure in head”
- Neck Pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Blurred vision
- Difficulty concentrating/remembering
- “Don’t feel right”
- Sensitivity to light/noise
- More emotional or irritable
- Fatigue or low energy
- Feeling like “in a fog”
- Feeling slowed down
- Confusion
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious

Observable Signs:

- Lying motionless on the playing surface
- Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head
- Disorientation or confusion
- Inability or slow to respond appropriately to questions
- Blank or vacant look
- Slow movement or incoordination
- Balance or walking difficulty
- Facial injury after head trauma

Management Protocol

1. If the player is ***unresponsive***- call for help & dial 911
2. If the athlete is ***not breathing***: start **CPR**
3. Assume a neck injury *until proven otherwise*
 - ✓ DO NOT move the athlete
 - ✓ DO NOT rush the evaluation
 - ✓ DO NOT have the athlete sit up or skate off until you have determined:
 - no neck pain
 - no pain, numbness or tingling
 - no midline neck tenderness
 - normal muscle strength
 - normal sensation to light touch
4. If the athlete is conscious & responsive without symptoms or signs of a neck injury...
 - help the player off the ice to the locker room
 - perform an evaluation
 - do not leave them alone
5. Evaluate the player in the locker room: **Concussion Recognition Tool 5** or other sideline assessment tools
 - Ask about concussion ***symptoms***
 - Observe for concussion ***signs***
 - ***Memory Assessment***
 - What venue are we at today?
 - What period is it?
 - Who scored last in this game?
 - Did your team win the last game?
 - Who was your opponent in the last game?

→ If a healthcare provider is not available, the player should be safely removed from practice or play and referral to a physician arranged.
6. A player with any symptoms or signs, disorientation, impaired memory, concentration, balance or recall has a SRC and should not be allowed to return to play on the day of injury.
7. The player should not be left alone after the injury, and serial monitoring for deterioration is essential over the initial few hours after injury.

If any of the signs or symptoms listed below develop or worsen: go to the **hospital emergency department** or dial **911**.

- Severe throbbing headache
- Dizziness or loss of coordination
- Ringing in the ears (tinnitus)
- Blurred or double vision
- Unequal pupil size
- No pupil reaction to light
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or tremors
- Sleepiness or grogginess
- Clear fluid running from the nose and/or ears
- Numbness or paralysis (partial or complete)
- Difficulty in being aroused

8. An athlete who is *symptomatic* after a concussion initially requires **physical** and **cognitive rest**.

- A concussed athlete **should not** participate in physical activity, return to school, and play video games or text message if he or she is having symptoms at rest.
- Concussion symptoms & signs *evolve over time*- the severity of the injury and estimated time to return to play are unpredictable.

9. A qualified health care provider guides the athlete through **Graduated Return-to-School** and **Graduated Return-to-Sport** strategies.

10. Written clearance from a qualified health care provider is required for an athlete to return to play without restriction (training, practice, and competition). Only the **USA Hockey Return to Play Form** is acceptable:

Graduated Return-to-Sport Strategy

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Symptom-limited activity	Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms	Gradual reintroduction of work/school activities
2	Light aerobic exercise	Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance training	Increase heart rate
3	Sport-specific exercise	Running or skating drills. No head impact activities	Add movement
4	Non-contact training drills	Harder training drills, eg, passing drills. May start progressive resistance training	Exercise, coordination and increased thinking
5	Full contact practice	Following medical clearance, participate in normal training activities	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff
6	Return to sport	Normal game play	

- After a brief period of rest (24–48 hours after injury), patients can be encouraged to become gradually and progressively more active as long as these activities do not bring on or worsen their symptoms.
- There should be at least 24 hours (or longer) for each step of the progression. If any symptoms worsen during exercise, the athlete should go back to the previous step.
- Resistance training should be added only in the later stages (stage 3 or 4 at the earliest).

Graduated Return-to-School Strategy

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Daily activities at home that do not give the child symptoms	Typical activities of the child during the day as long as they do not increase symptoms (eg, reading, texting, screen time). Start with 5–15 min 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 school activities until a full day can be tolerated	Return to full academic activities and catch up on missed work

- If symptoms are persistent (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.

USA HOCKEY CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

RETURN TO PLAY FORM

The USA Hockey Concussion Management Protocol and most state statutes require that an athlete be removed from any training, practice or game if they exhibit any signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion or are suspected of sustaining a concussion. The player should not return to physical activity until he or she has been evaluated by a qualified medical provider who has provided written clearance to return to sports.

This form is to be used after an athlete has been removed from athletic activity due to a suspected concussion and must be signed by their medical provider in order to return without restriction to training, practice and competition.

Player Name _____ D.O.B. ____/____/____

District/Affiliate: _____ Name of person reporting: _____

Association and Team: _____ Date of Injury: ____/____/____

Location of Injury/Arena: _____

Injury signs/symptoms: _____

Print Health Care Professional Name: _____ License Number: _____

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

I HEREBY AUTHORIZE THE ABOVE NAMED ATHLETE TO RETURN TO ATHLETIC ACTIVITY FOR FULL PARTICIPATION WITHOUT RESTRICTION.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

I AM THE PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF THE PLAYER IDENTIFIED ON THIS FORM AND I CONSENT TO THEIR RETURN TO ATHLETIC ACTIVITY WITHOUT RESTRICTION.

Parent/Legal Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

I AM THE COACH OF THE PLAYER IDENTIFIED AND I CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THIS CLEARANCE FORM ACKNOWLEDGING THE HEALTH CARE PROVIDER AND PARENT HAVE APPROVED THE ATHLETE'S RETURN TO PARTICIPATION WITHOUT RESTRICTION.

Coach Name: _____

Coach Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 5[©]

To help identify concussion in children, adolescents and adults



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RECOGNISE & REMOVE

Head impacts can be associated with serious and potentially fatal brain injuries. The Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5) is to be used for the identification of suspected concussion. It is not designed to diagnose concussion.

STEP 1: RED FLAGS – CALL AN AMBULANCE

If there is concern after an injury including whether ANY of the following signs are observed or complaints are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from play/game/activity. If no licensed healthcare professional is available, call an ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

• Neck pain or tenderness	• Severe or increasing headache	• Deteriorating conscious state
• Double vision	• Seizure or convulsion	• Vomiting
• Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs	• Loss of consciousness	• Increasingly restless, agitated or combative

Remember:

• In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.	• Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so.
• Assessment for a spinal cord injury is critical.	• Do not remove a helmet or any other equipment unless trained to do so safely.

If there are no Red Flags, identification of possible concussion should proceed to the following steps:

STEP 2: OBSERVABLE SIGNS

Visual clues that suggest possible concussion include:

• Lying motionless on the playing surface	• Disorientation or confusion, or an inability to respond appropriately to questions	• Balance, gait difficulties, motor incoordination, stumbling, slow laboured movements
• Slow to get up after a direct or indirect hit to the head	• Blank or vacant look	• Facial injury after head trauma

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STEP 3: SYMPTOMS

• Headache	• Blurred vision	• More emotional	• Difficulty concentrating
• "Pressure in head"	• Sensitivity to light	• More irritable	• Difficulty remembering
• Balance problems	• Sensitivity to noise	• Sadness	• Feeling slowed down
• Nausea or vomiting	• Fatigue or low energy	• Nervous or anxious	• Feeling like "in a fog"
• Drowsiness	• "Don't feel right"	• Neck Pain	
• Dizziness			

STEP 4: MEMORY ASSESSMENT

(IN ATHLETES OLDER THAN 12 YEARS)

Failure to answer any of these questions (modified appropriately for each sport) correctly may suggest a concussion:

• "What venue are we at today?"	• "What team did you play last week/game?"
• "Which half is it now?"	• "Did your team win the last game?"
• "Who scored last in this game?"	

Athletes with suspected concussion should:

- Not be left alone initially (at least for the first 1-2 hours).
- Not drink alcohol.
- Not use recreational/ prescription drugs.
- Not be sent home by themselves. They need to be with a responsible adult.
- Not drive a motor vehicle until cleared to do so by a healthcare professional.

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ANY ATHLETE WITH A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PRACTICE OR PLAY AND SHOULD NOT RETURN TO ACTIVITY UNTIL ASSESSED MEDICALLY, EVEN IF THE SYMPTOMS RESOLVE

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