

# POST CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

## for Nunavut children



Parachute  
Concussion Series

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how the brain works. A concussion can't be seen on X-rays or MRI scans.

### What causes a concussion?

Any blow or hit to the head, face or neck, or body that causes sudden shaking of the head can cause a concussion. Concussions can happen during sports like hockey, soccer, or volleyball or during motor vehicle collisions or falls.

### When should a concussion be suspected?

Concussion should be suspected in any child who takes a blow to the head, face, neck, or body and shows **any** of the signs or symptoms of a concussion.

### What are the symptoms of a concussion?

Symptoms describe how a child feels after they are injured. It is not necessary to be knocked out (black out) to have a concussion. Some symptoms may not appear until the next day. Common symptoms are:



- Headaches or head pressure
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Blurred or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Balance problems
- Feeling slow, tired or having no energy
- Not thinking clearly
- Easily upset or angered
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious
- Feeling more emotional
- Sleeping more or less
- Having a hard time falling asleep
- Difficulty working on a computer
- Difficulty reading or remembering

## What are the visible signs of a concussion?

Signs of concussion describe how a child looks or acts when they are injured. Common signs of a concussion are:

- Lying still on the ground or ice
- Slow to get up
- Confusion or can't answer questions
- Blank stare
- Difficulty standing or walking
- Injury to the face or holding their head

## What should a child do if they think they or a friend has a concussion?

All children who may have a concussion should immediately stop the activity they are doing and see a medical doctor or nurse. All children with a concussion should also get a note from a doctor or nurse before returning to sports.

## When should a child with a concussion go back to see a doctor or nurse?

Children with a concussion should return to see the doctor or nurse if they have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Feeling more confused
- Headache keeps getting worse
- Vomiting more than once
- Seizures
- Not waking up
- Trouble walking
- Difficulty talking
- Strange behaviour



## What can a child do to help recover from a concussion?

It is important that all children with a concussion take time to recover completely. Here are some tips:

- Avoid physical and mental activities that make symptoms worse
- Take a break if symptoms get worse
- Avoid activities that can be stressful
- Drink regular amounts of water and eat regular and balanced meals
- Get regular amounts of sleep
- Spend time with friends and family
- If school is more difficult, or a they feel more sad or nervous than normal, they should tell a trusted friend, family member, teacher, guidance counsellor, doctor, nurse or Elder
- Avoid drugs, alcohol, as well activities where they can hit their head
- Go to all medical appointments

## When can I go back to school, sports, and outdoor activities?

It is important that all children with a concussion make a gradual (step-by-step) return to school and sports. Each step should take one day. If symptoms return, go back to the last step and try it again until you can do it without symptoms. It is important to get a doctor’s note before returning to full-contact practice and games.

### Return to School Steps

Stage	Activity	Example
1	Activities at home that do not make you feel worse	Activities that do not make symptoms worse (e.g., reading, texting, screen time) Start at 5-15 minutes at a time
2	School activities	Homework, reading or other activities outside of the classroom
3	Return to school part-time	Getting back to school for a few hours or half days
4	Return to school full-time	Slow return to full days at school

## Return to Sport/Play Steps

Stage	Activity	Example
1	Physical activities that do not make you feel worse	Walking at home or in school
2	Light physical activity	Jogging or stationary cycling at slow to medium speed. No weight training.
3	Sport-specific exercise	Running or skating drills. No drills with risk of head injury
4	Non-contact practice	Practice without body contact. Gym class activities without risk of head injury
5	Full contact practice	Full practices after doing full time school and getting a doctor's note
6	Return to sport	Normal game play

After children are back to school and sports without symptoms, they can return to activities such as skating, hunting, bike riding and using motorized vehicles such as snowmobiles and ATVs.

## How long does it take a child to recover after a concussion?

Most children with a concussion will recover in 1-4 weeks but some (30%) can take longer.

## What can happen if a child goes back to sports too early after a concussion?

If children with a concussion go back to sports too early after a concussion, they can have another injury that can lead to worse or longer symptoms or a more severe or fatal brain injury.

## How can children help prevent concussions and their consequences?

To prevent concussions, children should follow the rules of their sport, respect their opponents, avoid head contact, and tell parents, teachers, or coaches if they think they or a teammate may have a concussion. Children should always wear helmets during outdoor activities such as skating or riding bikes, snowmobiles or ATVs.

## How can you learn more about concussions?

To learn more about concussions please visit: [parachute.ca/concussion](http://parachute.ca/concussion)