

# CONCUSSIONS 101



Because of the contact nature of the game and the speed with which the game is played, the brain is vulnerable to injury. Trauma may occur through direct contact to the head or face or indirectly through a whiplash effect. Injuries to the brain are characterized by an altered state of consciousness. It is the altered state of consciousness that is the key thing to look for with any head injury.

**Definition:** A concussion is a brain injury. A concussion may involve loss of consciousness. However, a concussion most often occurs without a loss of consciousness.

Mechanism: Blow to the head, face or jaw, or even elsewhere on the body.

**Note:** *Children are more sensitive to the effects of a concussion and may need to have a longer period of rest prior to returning to play.*

## Common Symptoms and Signs

- 1) Symptoms and signs may appear immediately upon injury, have a delayed onset or may be worse later that day or even the next morning, so players should continue to be observed even after the initial symptoms and signs appear to have returned to normal.
- 2) Concussion is a "symptom" injury - there are fewer outward signs than symptoms. This may make it more difficult for the observer to detect and easier for the player to mask/hide the symptoms.

### Symptoms

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Feeling dazed
- Seeing stars
- Sensitivity to light
- Ringing in ears
- Tiredness
- Nausea, vomiting
- Irritability
- Confusion, disorientation

### Signs

- Poor balance or coordination
- Slow or slurred speech
- Poor concentration
- Delayed responses to questions
- Vacant stare
- Decreased playing ability
- Unusual emotions, personality change, and inappropriate behaviour

**ANY ONE OF THESE SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS IS ENOUGH TO REMOVE A PLAYER FROM ACTION.**

**Mental Status Testing For information only. Do not attempt to treat a concussion. Always have the player consult a physician.**

Orientation: Does the player know what the exact time and place is?

Concentration: Can the player spell "world" backwards?

Memory: Does the player know the score of the game?