

Concussion Policy

Head Injury and Concussion:

The term 'head injury' covers cuts and bruises to the scalp as well as any injury to the brain, commonly caused by being hit on the head, a fall, knock or shaking which is known as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

A hard hit or forcible shake can cause the brain to bounce around and be injured by the hard bone of the skull. This causes a bruise on the brain, damage to nerve fibres and blood vessels. It can also cause bleeding or a blood clot and may start some hours after the injury takes place.

If you injure your head, your neck can be hurt as well. If you or a team member suffers a head injury, there may be no immediate symptoms – no loss of consciousness and no signs of injury on your head or face. However, it's very important to carefully monitor a person who has had a head injury, as symptoms may develop later.

If the person is unconscious or is unable to move all or some of their limbs, or is complaining of neck pain:

- Call 111 immediately
- Do not move the person (unless it's dangerous to leave them where they are)

When to see a Doctor:

Take the person to a doctor as soon as possible if they lose consciousness (even for a moment)

or if the person has any of the following symptoms as they may have concussion.

Symptoms of Concussion:

- not remembering what happened immediately before or after the injury
- confusion, difficulty concentrating
- loss of judgement and coordination, walking unsteadily, dizziness
- slurred speech
- headache that lasts a long time or gets worse
- vomiting or nausea
- ringing in their ears
- pupils of their eyes being different sizes
- changes in vision (what they can see)
- becoming sensitive to light
- loss of smell or taste
- Children may be irritable, sleepy and generally 'not themselves'.

Call Healthline 0800 611 116 if you are unsure what you should do.

Post Concussion Syndrome

Some symptoms continue for several weeks, symptoms of post concussion syndrome include:

- forgetfulness
- trouble concentrating
- personality changes
- headaches
- tiredness
- not being able to sleep or being very sleepy.

The person might need time off school or work and should avoid activities (like sport) that could cause another injury.

Avoiding another Injury

A second injury to the head of a concussed person can be very dangerous. It can cause brain swelling, coma or death. Serious or long term effects are much more likely if a brain injury is repeated.

Returning to Sport

ACC guidelines say that a person who has had concussion should not play sport or train for 3 weeks after the injury.

After this time you can play or train if you have no symptoms of your injury and your doctor has said you are fit to return to play.

Self Care

If you or a family member has a minor head injury with no worrying symptoms, ACC recommends:

- Apply ice or a cool pack for 10 to 20 minutes, every two to four hours, for the next day or two. (Wrapped ice or a pack of frozen vegetables also works) This will reduce swelling of the scalp and help with the pain.
- Drink only clear fluids for the first 2 hours, to decrease the likelihood of vomiting.
- Take nothing stronger than paracetamol for pain.
- Rest – someone must stay with the injured person if they sleep.
- Check every 2 hours to see if the person wakes easily (if asleep) and responds normally; that their behaviour and movements are normal; and that they know who they are and where they are.
- A responsible person should stay with the person for 48 hours after the injury.
- The injured person shouldn't drink any alcohol for 24 hours.

If you have any concerns at all, see your doctor.

Game Protocols:

During a Game:

- If during a game, play must be stopped as a result of a player sustaining a blow to head or other impact that causes concern for head or neck injury, then that player may not return to the rest of the game.
- Game officials must record the player's name and number on the game sheet, noting that the player left the game as a result of a blow to head or other impact that caused concern for head or neck injury.
- The game referee(s) must report the incident to the tournament Event Manager
- The team manager of the player in question must advise that the player (or the player's parents/guardians if 17 and under) must produce a medical clearance before returning to any training or competition.
- If during a game, a player's coach or manager observe concussion-like symptoms (e.g., dazed, dizziness, loss of balance, vomiting, etc.), they must ensure the player does not return to play and they must report the injury to game officials (to be recorded on the game sheet and then reported to the Event Manager.

During Training:

- If a player sustains a blow to the head or other impact that causes concern for head or neck injury during training, the coach(s) must remove the player from the training.
- If 17 and under the coach(s) must advise the player's parents/guardians of the Concussion protocol. The injured players parents/guardians must produce a medical clearance before returning to any training or competition.
- If 18 and over, the coach(s) must notify the player of the Concussion protocol. The injured player must produce a medical clearance before returning to any training or competition.

First Aid for Concussion

If you think someone may have a concussion, use the following steps:

- Check to make sure the scene is safe.
- Check for loss of consciousness.
- If the person is unconscious, check their ABC (airway, breathing, circulation)
- Do not move the person unless absolutely necessary.
- Check the person's mental awareness.
- Check the person's eyes.
- Watch for vomiting.
- Keep the person awake for a period of time to see if their condition gets worse.
- Be aware that complaints can subside only to appear later on and be worse.
- Be aware that children can become worse very quickly.

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