

# CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

## RETURN TO PLAY

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**\*\*If concussion symptoms (example: headache, dizziness, fogginess, etc.) worsen during any step, the athlete should go back to the previous step. They may then retry the step. For example, if symptoms occur during step 2, go back to step 1 for 24 hours, then try step 2 again. \*\***

### **Step 1:**

- Rehabilitation stage: Symptom-limited activity/ daily activities that do not provoke symptoms for 1 day (about 24 hours)
- Functional exercise: physical and cognitive rest. Ask patients to “take it easy”, do not isolate children or teenagers with no personal contact, technology, etc.
- May progress onto Step 2 with mild symptoms with brain tasks (like attending school, reading, studying, reasoning/focusing, test taking, texting, video games, etc.). If there are any symptoms with brain activities at any point, do not progress any further in the return to play protocol until symptom free for 1 day.

### **Step 2:**

- Rehabilitation stage: light aerobic exercise, no resistance for 1 day (about 24 hours.)
- Functional exercise: walking, swimming, or stationary bike with no resistance with the goal of increasing heart rate.

### **Step 3:**

- Rehabilitation stage: sport-specific exercise for 1 day (about 24 hours.)
- Functional exercise: skating drills in ice hockey, running drills in soccer. NO HEAD IMPACT ACTIVITIES OR 1-ON-1 SCRIMAGING. Progressive addition of resistance training.

### **Step 4:**

- Rehabilitation stage: non-contact training drills for 1 day (about 24 hours)
- Functional exercise: progression to more complex training drills (examples: passing drills in football and ice hockey). NO HEAD IMPACT ACTIVITIES.
- SEE PHYSICIAN FOR MEDICAL CLEARANCE BEFORE NEXT STAGE (BEFORE step 5)

### **Step 5:**

- Rehabilitation stage: full contact/ unrestricted practice
- Functional exercise: following medical clearance, participate in normal training activities. Coaching staff to assess functional skills.  
\*\*if symptoms occur, stop activity for 24 hours, then try step 4 again AND contact your doctor\*\*

### **Step 6:**

- Rehabilitation stage: return to play
- Functional exercise: normal game play

**Disclaimer:** Pathways are intended as a guide for practitioners and do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment nor serve as a standard of medical care. These pathways should be adapted by medical providers, when indicated, based on their professional judgement, and taking into account individual patient and family circumstances.