



Five Key Elements for an Effective Concussion Policy

Canadian Sport for Life Summit
Gatineau, QC | January 2017





About Play Safe



- Established in 2010
- Registered program of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
- **Vision:** An active life, injury free
- **Mission:** To reduce injury in sport and physical activity



About Play Safe



3 objectives:

1. Connect
2. Capacity
3. Change

3 assumptions:


1. One size does not fit all
2. Participant-centred
3. Better to prevent than manage



In the past 12 months....




- Do you know **how many** concussions occurred in your organization?
- Do you know the **leading cause** of concussion injuries in your organization?
- Do you know who is **most at-risk** for concussion in your organization?



6 Things you should know:

1. Concussion is a brain injury.
2. A child's brain is still developing and requires a unique approach to care.
3. You can have a concussion without losing consciousness.
4. Concussion symptoms are more than just physical. They can be mental, emotional or behavioural.
5. Most concussions resolve quickly, however 30% of people have symptoms that last longer than 4 weeks.
6. It's essential for optimal recovery to rest your mind and body.


Adapted from Holland Bloorview (2016)



Concussion myths vs. facts

Myth	Fact
Treating an adult concussion is the same as treating a child.	


Adapted from Holland Bloorview (2016)



Concussion myths vs. facts

Myth	Fact
Treating an adult concussion is the same as treating a child	A child's brain is still developing, so it's important to treat them differently than an adult.


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Concussion myths vs. facts

Myth	Fact
Treating an adult concussion is the same as treating a child.	A child's brain is still developing, so it's important to treat them differently than an adult.
The tougher you are the quicker you can return to sports and activities.	


Adapted from Holland Bloorview (2016)



Concussion myths vs. facts

Myth	Fact
Treating an adult concussion is the same as treating a child.	A child's brain is still developing, so it's important to treat them differently than an adult.
The tougher you are the quicker you can return to sports and activities.	Concussions are invisible. The damage is often not easily noticeable. So when in doubt, sit it out.


Adapted from Holland Bloorview (2016)



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Treating an adult concussion is the same as treating a child.	A child's brain is still developing, so it's important to treat them differently than an adult.
The tougher you are the quicker you can return to sports and activities.	Concussions are invisible. The damage is often not easily noticeable. So when in doubt, sit it out.
Only athletes in aggressive contact sports suffer from concussions.	


Adapted from Holland Bloorview (2016)



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Treating an adult concussion is the same as treating a child.	A child's brain is still developing, so it's important to treat them differently than an adult.
The tougher you are the quicker you can return to sports and activities.	Concussions are invisible. The damage is often not easily noticeable. So when in doubt, sit it out.
Only athletes in aggressive contact sports suffer from concussions.	Anyone can get a concussion, in fact many kids and youth are injured performing daily activities like biking, playing and swimming.

Adapted from Holland Bloorview (2016)



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Treating an adult concussion is the same as treating a child.	A child's brain is still developing, so it's important to treat them differently than an adult.
The tougher you are the quicker you can return to sports and activities.	Concussions are invisible. The damage is often not easily noticeable. So when in doubt, sit it out.
Only athletes in aggressive contact sports suffer from concussions.	Anyone can get a concussion, in fact many kids and youth are injured performing daily activities like biking, playing and swimming.
All concussion symptoms subside quickly.	

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The tougher you are the quicker you can return to sports and activities.	Concussions are invisible. The damage is often not easily noticeable. So when in doubt, sit it out.
Only athletes in aggressive contact sports suffer from concussions.	Anyone can get a concussion, in fact many kids and youth are injured performing daily activities like biking, playing and swimming.
All concussion symptoms subside quickly.	Some symptoms are less obvious than others. In fact 30% experience symptoms lasting longer than 4 weeks and kids can take longer to recover.

Adapted from Holland Bloorview (2016)

The 5 key elements:



1. Be ready for an emergency
2. Ensure safe play
3. Build the science
4. Focus on education
5. Manage return to play

Available for free download:
www.playsafeinitiative.ca

1. Be ready for an emergency

- ☐ Create, communicate and practice an **emergency medical plan** with steps for initial management after calling 911 and waiting for paramedics/first responders to arrive.
- ☐ Identify individuals certified in CPR/First Aid to respond to **medical emergencies** during programs, games and practices.



2. Ensure safe play

- ☐ When planning recreation and sports activities, create guidelines for **limiting head and body contact**
- ☐ **Modify rules** to limit certain drills or techniques to help reduce the risk of injury
- ☐ Create guidelines for checking **equipment** often to ensure equipment fits correctly, is in good condition, is stored properly, and is replaced according to manufacturer's instructions.

3. Build the science

- ☐ Create a system for collecting and analyzing concussion injury incident **data** reported by participants during the season or program
- ☐ **Assess** changes in concussion/injury rates over sessions or seasons
- ☐ **Measure** changes in concussion knowledge, awareness and action among leaders, parents and participants before and after policies are implemented (or updated)



4. Focus on education

- ☐ Post **information** about concussion in all facilities
- ☐ Host regular **education sessions** for participants, parents, leaders, program and facility staff
- ☐ Include a standard pamphlet or **information** sheet to be distributed to all new and returning participants and their parents

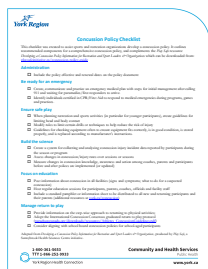


5. Manage return to play

- ❑ Provide information on the **step-wise approach** to returning to physical activities
- ❑ Adopt the **International Concussion Consensus** graduated return to play protocol
- ❑ Consider aligning with **school board concussion policies** for school-aged participants



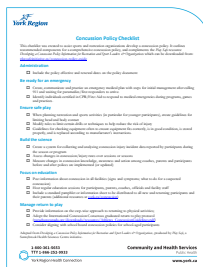
Concussion Policy Checklist




- Developed to complement the Concussion Policy Guide
- Can be used to evaluate existing policies
- Can be used to guide new policy development

Workshop Activity


1. Evaluate the sample concussion policy provided using the Concussion Policy Checklist
2. Identify highlights and gaps
3. If each box is worth 1-pt, what is the total score of the policy?





Summary

- ❑ Concussion prevention and management should be positioned within a broader injury prevention strategy
- ❑ Organizations should adopt common strategies in their policies and action plans
- ❑ The 5 key elements presented today are necessary to accomplish the goal of concussion prevention and management






Thank you! Questions?

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Additional Resources

- Concussion Awareness Training Tool
<http://www.cattonline.com/>
- Holland Bloorview Concussion Research Centre
<http://hollandbloorview.ca/programsandservices/concussioncentre>
- Parachute's Active and Safe Concussion Toolkit
<http://www.parachutecanada.org/active-and-safe>
- Play Safe Initiative Resources
<http://www.playsafeinitiative.ca/resources>
- Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation Guidelines for Concussion/mTBI & Persistent Symptoms: Second Edition (Adults)
<http://onf.ca/documents/guidelines-for-concussion-mtbi-persistent-symptoms-second-edition>
- Canadian Sport for Life injury Prevention and Physical Literacy Guide for Organizations
<http://canadiansportforlife.ca/cs4l-physical-literacy-and-injury-prevention-how-guide-clubs>
