



CONCUSSION RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a neurologic injury which causes a temporary disturbance in brain cells that comes from and is the result of an extreme acceleration or deceleration of the brain within the skull. The common misconception is that you must be hit in the head to cause a concussion injury – this is not true! Because a concussion is the result of acceleration or deceleration of the brain, a concussion can happen with a significant blow to anywhere on the body, provided sufficient acceleration/deceleration is transmitted to the brain tissue, head or face, there may be no other visible signs of a brain injury. It can cause changes in the brain that may not be seen in a CT scan or X-Ray. Balance, reaction time and cognitive skills can also be impacted.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

Symptoms of a concussion range from mild to severe and can last for or appear within hours, days, weeks, or even months. In some cases, there may be no symptoms at all. If you suspect a concussion, or notice any of the symptoms listed below, contact your doctor immediately. In severe cases, proceed to an Urgent Care Centre or Emergency Room immediately.

Visible Symptoms

Loss of consciousness or responsiveness * Loss of motion / slow to rise
Unsteady on feet / balance issues * Grabbing / clutching head
Dazed, vacant or blank look * Vomiting
Disoriented * Bleeding from nose / ears
Sensitivity to light * Unequal pupils (eye)
Seizures or convulsions * Deteriorating conscious state

Non-Visible Symptoms

Confusion / disorientation * Complaints of pain / headache
Complaints of dizziness / nausea * Complaints of fuzzy / blurred vision
Inability to concentrate * Easily upset / angered (emotional)
Nervous / anxious
Tired / sleeping more or less than usual
Complaints of tingling / burning feeling in arms & legs
Trouble falling asleep * Memory loss – unable to remember events leading up to incident
** Please note that complaints of neck pain should be addressed immediately as a head injury may also result in a neck / spinal injury*



WL Emergency Protocol – Suspected Player Concussion

A player showing any signs/symptoms as listed on the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool or as listed in this document **must** be removed from play immediately. All Coaches/Trainers are required to be familiar with the use of this tool and follow the Club's protocol without question. The player is not to re-enter the game or practice.

- In the event of a loss of consciousness call 911 for assistance immediately. Do not move the player unless absolutely necessary for safety reasons.
 - Ensure that a member of the team staff stays with the player.
 - Notify any family members immediately if they are present.
 - The player must be evaluated by a physician prior to returning to play. Documentation from the physician is required. Average recovery period is 10 -14 days, but can sometimes longer.
 - Graduated "Return to Play process" as per Zurich Concussion guidelines (2012).
 - Coaches must complete required injury report and submit to OSC within 24 hrs of the incident.

WL Return to Play Stages Protocol

This is a multi-part process that requires supervision from the player's health care provider at each stage.

1. Limited activity * Physical and cognitive rest
2. Light aerobic exercise * Walking, swimming, cycling
3. Sport specific exercise * Light running skills, no heading
4. Non-contact training drills * Passing / movement
5. Full contact practice * Normal training cycle
6. Return to play * Normal game play

** A minimum of 24 hrs. is required between each stage.*

Any recurrence of symptoms requires the player to return to the previous level. WL Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Managers and Trainers are not authorized to oversee return to Play processes.

Base Line Testing

WL recommends that players involved in competitive programs undergo Base Line Testing prior to the beginning of the outdoor season. This should be done in a controlled environment under the supervision of an approved concussion testing facility. Most benefit companies cover the cost of baseline testing.



Concussion Code of Conduct for Athletes and Parents/Guardians (for athletes under 18 year of age)

I will help prevent concussions by:

- Wearing the proper equipment for my sport and wearing it correctly.
- Developing my skills and strength so that I can participate to the best of my ability.
- Respecting the rules of my sport or activity.
- My commitment to fair play and respect for all* (respecting other athletes, coaches, team trainers and officials).

I will care for my health and safety by taking concussions seriously, and I understand that:

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short- and long-term effects.
- A blow to my head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes the brain to move around inside the skull may cause a concussion.
- I don't need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- I have a commitment to concussion recognition and reporting, including self-reporting of possible concussion and reporting to a designated person when and individual suspects that another individual may have sustained a concussion.* (Meaning: If I think I might have a concussion I should stop participating in further training, practice or competition **immediately**, or tell an adult if I think another athlete has a concussion).
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice or competition with a possible concussion increases my risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases my risk of other injuries.

I will not hide concussion symptoms. I will speak up for myself and others.

- I will not hide my symptoms. I will tell a coach, official, team trainer, parent or another adult I trust if I experience **any** symptoms of concussion.
- If someone else tells me about concussion symptoms, or I see signs they might have a concussion, I will tell a coach, official, team trainer, parent or another adult I trust so they can help.

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- I understand that if I have a suspected concussion, I will be removed from sport and that I will not be able to return to training, practice or competition until I undergo a medical assessment by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition.
- I have a commitment to sharing any pertinent information regarding incidents of removal from sport with the athlete's school and any other sport organization with which the athlete has registered* (Meaning: If I am diagnosed with a concussion, I understand that letting all of my other coaches and teachers know about my injury will help them support me while I recover.)

I will take the time I need to recover, because it is important for my health.

- I understand my commitment to supporting the return-to-sport process* (I will have to follow my sport organization's Return-to-Sport Protocol).
- I understand I will have to be medically cleared by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to training, practice or competition.
- I will respect my coaches, team trainers, parents, health-care professionals, and medical doctors and nurse practitioners, regarding my health and safety.

I will help prevent concussions, through my:

- Commitment to zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions*
- Acknowledgement of mandatory expulsion from competition for violating zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions (Meaning: I will be disqualified/expelled from play if I violate the zero-tolerance policy). *
- Acknowledgement of the escalating consequences for those who repeatedly violate the Concussion Code of Conduct. *



Concussion Code of Conduct for Coaches and Team Trainers

I can help prevent concussions through my:

- Efforts to ensure that my athletes wear the proper equipment and wear it correctly.
- Efforts to help my athletes develop their skills and strength so they can participate to the best of their abilities.
- Respect for the rules of my sport or activity and efforts to ensure that my athletes do, too.
- Commitment to fair play and respect for all (respecting other coaches, team trainers, officials and all participants and ensuring my athletes respect others and play fair). *

I will care for the health and safety of all participants by taking concussions seriously. I understand that:

- A concussion is a brain injury that can have both short- and long-term effects.
- A blow to the head, face, or neck, or a blow to the body may cause the brain to move around inside the skull and result in a concussion.
- A person doesn't need to lose consciousness to have had a concussion.
- An athlete with a suspected concussion should stop participating in training, practice or competition **immediately**.
- I have a commitment to concussion recognition and reporting, including self-reporting of possible concussion and reporting to a designated person when an individual suspects that another individual may have sustained a concussion. *
- Continuing to participate in further training, practice or competition with a suspected concussion increases a person's risk of more severe, longer lasting symptoms, and increases their risk of other injuries or even death.

I will create an environment where participants feel safe and comfortable speaking up. I will:

- Encourage athletes not to hide their symptoms, but to tell me, an official, parent or another adult they trust if they experience **any** symptoms of concussion after an impact.
- Lead by example. I will tell a fellow coach, official, team trainer and seek medical attention by a physician or nurse practitioner if I am experiencing any concussion symptoms.
- Understand and respect that any athlete with a suspected concussion must be removed from sport and not permitted to return until they undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner and have been medically cleared to return to training, practice or competition.

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- *For coaches only:* Commit to providing opportunities before and after each training, practice and competition to enable athletes to discuss potential issues related to concussions. *

I will support all participants to take the time they need to recover.

- I understand my commitment to supporting the return-to-sport process. *
- I understand the athletes will have to be cleared by a physician or nurse practitioner before returning to sport.
- I will respect my fellow coaches, team trainers, parents, physicians and nurse practitioners and any decisions made with regards to the health and safety of my athletes.

I will help prevent concussions, through my:

- Commitment to zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions. *
- Acknowledgement of mandatory expulsion from competition for violating zero-tolerance for prohibited play that is considered high risk for causing concussions. *
- Acknowledgement of the escalating consequences for those who repeatedly violate the Concussion Code of Conduct. *

Caution

Whitecaps London is committed to providing a safe environment for all players regardless of age and gender. It is, however, ultimately the responsibility of the parent to ensure that appropriate professional care is provided to players under the age of 18 in the event of injury. In the event of a concussion diagnosis, premature return to play can result in serious and sometimes permanent injury, particularly in the event of a second impact. Parents should seek ongoing medical evaluation for the benefit of the player's long term health and safety.

Concussion Testing Facilities

Fowler Kennedy

1151 Richmond St
London, ON
519-661-3011

Wortley Wellness Centre

119 Wortley Rd
London, ON
519-433-2220

ReActive Physiotherapy

665 Fanshawe Park Rd W
London, ON
519-601-5522