

Hello everyone,

A concussion is a direct or indirect blow to the head which leads to complications in terms of brain function. In soccer, this happens relatively frequently. The majority of concussions occur through contact between opponents or with a goal post. On occasion, blows to the head can occur when players try to stop the ball with one's head.

A concussion can be present even if a player did not lose consciousness!

Following a blow, one can suspect a concussion in the unusual presence of the following signs or symptoms : dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, balance problems, trouble falling asleep, sleeping more than usual, drowsiness, sensitivity to light, sensitivity to noise, mood swings, irritability, sadness, nervousness, numbness, impaired memory, etc.

One must then immediately pull the player off the field for the rest of the day to monitor the player's signs and symptoms.

If the following signs or symptoms are present, it is crucial to immediately bring the player to the emergency room : loss of consciousness on impact, convulsions, speaking incoherently, disoriented, paralysis or numbness in legs or arms, trouble speaking, trouble seeing, coordination problems.

Once the signs and symptoms disappear, it is possible to return **progressively** to soccer. A player must return to studies and other cognitive activities before sports. It is important to make a progressive return to see if the player can tolerate physical or cognitive activity, to see how the player reacts in contact situations and to give the brain enough time to recover.

It is presently recognized that 6 steps are necessary before returning to full activity level with the team :

- 1- Complete rest (including from reading, school, TV and video games). One week's rest for players who are still growing.
- 2- Tolerance to light physical activity (walking or biking).
- 3- Tolerance to physical activity of medium intensity (running).
- 4- Exposure to sprints, jumps and change in directions specific to soccer.
- 5- Exposure to contact situations specific to soccer and practice situations (headers).

Before going to step 6, a player needs a medical expert's permission

6- Game (return to normal activities with the team)

The norm to go from one step to the next is to wait 24 hours after a step is completed and if no signs and symptoms reappear, one can then go on to the following step. If signs or symptoms appear, rest is necessary and 24 hours after the signs and symptoms disappear, the last step that was without signs or symptoms can be done over. For children and teenagers, it is suggested to do each step twice before going on to the following step and to wait 48 hours without any signs or symptoms. Because it is the brain that has been hit, it is crucial to follow these steps without fault in order to avoid permanent damages to brain function or running the risk of a second blow which could prove to be fatal. One must remember that the long-term well-being of the child is the priority. For parents and coaches/educators, this responsibility falls on you, even if the child wants to play.

To prevent concussions and injuries in general, please consider the following : fair play and respect the rules, adequate equipment, adequately teach basic technique, raise the awareness of parents, players and coaches/educators about the consequences of concussions. The Quebec Soccer Federation will continue to develop measures in order to improve as much as possible the way we protect our players.

http://www.federation-soccer.qc.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=225:conseil-medical&catid=97:nos-programmes

