

Being active is lots of fun, and it helps keep you healthy! Sometimes when you're active, you can get hurt. Did you know it's possible to hurt your brain? Hurting your brain is different than hurting other parts of your body. If you sprain your ankle, it will get swollen and red, but if you hurt your brain, you won't be able to see it, because it's inside your head! One kind of brain injury is called a concussion. One of the best ways to stay safe and healthy is to know how to prevent concussions, and what to do if you think you have one.

# Being Mindful About CONCUSSIONS



## What is a concussion?

A concussion is an injury to your brain. Any bump to the head, face or neck could cause a concussion. A concussion could also be caused by getting hit in the body in a way that moves your head sharply. Getting hit in the head with a ball, falling onto the floor, or someone bumping into you too hard could cause a concussion. A concussion is a serious injury. Most people get better quickly, but it can affect how you think and feel.

## What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

If you think that you, a friend, or another Scout has one or more of these symptoms, **tell an adult as soon as possible.** You should not be left alone if you have a concussion. You do not need to be knocked out to have a concussion.



Headache



Dizziness

Throwing up or feeling like throwing up

### HOW YOU MIGHT FEEL



Blurry or double vision



Ringing in your ears

Tired

"Don't feel right"



Sensitive to light or sound

### THINKING PROBLEMS

Feeling really sad or angry

Feeling confused

Problems concentrating

Problems remembering things that happened right before you got hurt

## What to do if you think you have a concussion?

Stop playing.

1

Tell an adult, like your parent or Scouter.

2

Get checked by a doctor or nurse practitioner.

3

Follow the Return to Scouts after a Concussion protocol.

4

# Getting better

It's important when recovering from a concussion that **you do not do any activity that has a risk of body contact, falling, or hitting your head** until your Doctor or Nurse Practitioner tells you that it is safe.

When you have a concussion, safely returning to Scouting activities and school is an important part of your recovery from a concussion. You will have to stop doing any activity that could risk you getting hit until your Doctor or Nurse Practitioner decides it is safe and you are fully back to school, but there are many non-contact and more gentle activities that you can enjoy 1–2 days after your accident, even if you still have symptoms from your concussion.

Did you hit your head at school or while at a different activity? **Be sure to tell your Scouter right away if you have a concussion** so we can make sure that the activities at Scouts are right for you!

In fact, resting completely for more than two days after a concussion can make your recovery take longer and things like starting gentle physical exercise (walking, jogging, biking on a stationary bike) and returning to school can actually help improve your recovery. Scouts Canada has a system called "Return to Scouts after a Concussion" which will help you to return to your usual activities, including Scouting.

## Return to Scouts after a Concussion



**STEP 1.** Start with calm and quiet activities around the house that do not make you feel worse. Light walking is ok as long as it does not increase your heart rate. Do not do any sports. Do not stay at step 1 for more than 1–2 days after your accident.

**STEP 4.** Return to full Scout sessions and full days at school. Take breaks and change the activities so that you can participate even though you are not completely better. Be sure to still avoid activities that put you at risk of getting hit in the head like dodge-ball, tobogganing or soccer.



**STEP 2.** Light exercise, like walking, for 20–30 minutes at a time, but take a break if your concussion symptoms become a lot worse or are really bothering you. Start to return to Scouts and school for 1–2 hours a day but avoid sports. A Doctor's note is not needed.

**STEP 5.** Once you have been cleared by a doctor or nurse practitioner, you can start to participate in all non-competitive Scouting activities like tobogganing and sports like dodgeball and soccer and all school activities in gym class.



**STEP 3.** Start more active exercises like hiking or jogging. Increase the amount of time and how hard you are working. It's important that you do not do anything that could risk you getting hit (like hockey or karate). Increase your activities at Scouts and at school.

**STEP 6.** You can now do sport competitions.



## Helmets

Wearing a helmet for certain activities is an important part of keeping your head safe. For activities like biking, skateboarding, skating or sledding, you should always wear a helmet. Make sure that it fits you! You should also make sure that your helmet is in good condition (not cracked or broken) and that you wear it properly.

