

What is a Concussion?

Is a brain injury that results in a temporary loss of function. It can cause a variety of physical, cognitive, and emotional symptoms. Repeated and or undiagnosed concussions can cause cumulative brain damage such as dementia pugilistica or severe complications such as second-impact syndrome. Unfortunately, the general misunderstanding of this injury and lack of in depth diagnostic procedures leaves some athletes playing when they shouldn't be and others not playing when they could be. It is our goal to maximize the safety of our athletes and athlete participation at the same time.



Hockey NS Better Safe Than Sorry Policy

Many athletic associations, including HNS are following a "better safe than sorry" policy. This philosophy has traditionally been implemented in the form of an automatic 7 day ban from activity unless medical clearance has been provided by a qualified health professional. Longer periods of absence are enforced for 2nd and 3rd time head injuries, etc.

This cautious procedure is due to the lack of diagnostic criteria to evaluate concussions and the fact that symptoms may vary from person to person.

Baseline Testing is the Key to Safe, Timely Return to Play

Without a working knowledge of an athlete's pre-injury neurologic capability, there really is no gold standard to diagnose concussion in the absence of severe symptoms, even though a mild concussion may still be present... hence the play it safe approach. Baseline/Pre-injury testing supplies the physician with a thorough understanding of an athletes neurological status. If a head injury should occur, these baseline tests will prove to be an invaluable tool to guide return to play decisions and/ or treatment goals.



Why should I get the baseline testing?

First and foremost is the safety of the athlete! Secondly, HNS is adamant that this concussion policy is ultimately the responsibility of the coach. Any coach and/or player that does not follow this policy is at risk of indefinite suspension. HNS is taking concussions seriously... so should you. Protect your brain and prevent unnecessary games missed at the same time.

Diagnosing a Concussion?

There is no “gold standard” for the diagnosis of concussion. To best evaluate, a combination of testing must be considered together. Unfortunately, most testing is of little value without having an individualized baseline for comparison. The doctors at ChiroCare are teaming up with you to protect your athletes and keep them safe. With regards to concussion and brain injury, having a baseline examination is the key to player safety and return to play decision making. Without this environment, we are using a best guess, non-individualized approach; players are playing when they shouldn't while others are not when they could be. We will provide a safe environment to offer protection while optimizing player participation.



Example Scenario 1

Player X proceeds into the season without baseline concussion testing. Player X receives a bad hit and his health/concussion status is questionable. Player X continues to play and practice with an undiagnosed concussion. Player X gets hit again and is injured much more seriously.

Example Scenario 2

Player Y proceeds into the season without baseline concussion testing. Player Y receives a bad hit and his health/concussion status is questionable. Player Y sits out for 1 week as a precaution. Player Y misses 2 games and 2 practices.



Example Scenario 3

Player Z proceeds into the season WITH baseline concussion testing. Player Z receives a bad hit and his health/concussion status is questionable. Player Z proceeds for follow up diagnostic testing. Player Z is correctly diagnosed and returns to play or begins treatment.

Why use the HeadStart Program at ChiroCare?

ChiroCare has a long history with SMH. Co-owner Dr. Jeff O'Flaherty is a lifelong member + cares a great deal about the Association and it's members. As a coach for the Bantam AA Flyers, he understands first hand the challenges faced by players, parents and coaches when it comes to the difficult decision making with regards to head injuries. With Hockey Nova Scotia implementing a "better safe than sorry" policy which leaves the coaches ultimately responsible, we want to make this decision making as easy as possible for all involved. Our set of diagnostic tests, with baseline results to compare to, will be an invaluable service heading into the season.



Confidence in the Quality of Care

Chiropractors are highly trained doctors. You do not need a referral from your family doctor to see one and they are qualified to make an accurate diagnosis. Chiropractors have an in depth understanding of the human body and all of it's systems, much like doctors of the medical profession, who use the same set of procedures and exams to make a medical diagnosis. The major difference being that chiropractors focus on nutrition and manual therapies for the prevention of disease and illness. We want to provide a system to manage head injuries and help prevent long term effects from occurring.



SCAT2 - Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 2

This tool represents a standardized method of evaluating injured athletes for concussion. It is used by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF). It evaluates multiple aspects of neurologic function such as memory, concentration, balance and coordination. and other general neurologic processes.