

# HOW TO RECOGNIZE A CONCUSSION IN CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS



A concussion is a brain injury that causes changes in brain function.

The mechanism of injury can involve contact  
(e.g. direct contact/collision with another skater, boards or ice;  
fall or hit to head during off-ice training)  
or non-contact  
(e.g. an awkward landing from a jump; toe pick catch on ice;  
whiplash during off-ice training).

Please note that this Tool should be used for all skaters, coaches and other  
Skate Canada skating club/school personnel.

**If any of the signs or symptoms below are observed after a suspected  
injury, call 911 for urgent medical assessment.**

The individual should not be allowed to continue skating/training/coaching  
and should only be moved by trained health-care professionals.

## STEP 1 - RED FLAGS - CALL AN AMBULANCE

- Any loss of consciousness or deteriorating state of consciousness
- Neck pain or tenderness
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms and legs
- Worsening headache or pressure in the head
- Seizure or convulsion
- Any bleeding or fluid leaking from the ears, eyes or nose
- Vomiting
- Increasingly restless, agitated or combative

### REMEMBER:

- You do not have to lose consciousness to sustain a concussion.
- In all cases the basic principles of first aid should be followed.
  - Assessment for a spinal cord injury is critical!
  - DO NOT move the individual unless trained to do so safely.
- DO NOT remove a helmet or any other equipment unless trained to do so safely.

**IF THERE ARE NO RED FLAGS,  
PROCEED TO STEP 2 FOR IDENTIFICATION OF A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION**

## STEP 2 - SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

### SYMPTOMS:

- Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
- Confusion or feeling as if in a fog
- Difficulty with memory recall or difficulty recalling the traumatic event
- Dizziness or disorientation
- Nausea/vomiting
- Delayed response to questions
- Appearing dazed/drowsy
- Fatigue
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Blurred vision
- Feeling slowed down
- Poor focus/concentration and retention
- More emotional/irritable/anxious

### SIGNS:

- Lying motionless on the ice/ground, or slow to get up
- Inability to respond appropriately to questions
- Balance or coordination issues

## STEP 3 - IF YOU SUSPECT A CONCUSSION

- DO NOT leave the individual unsupervised at the rink or at home.
- DO NOT let the individual return to the ice/activity.
- DO NOT let the individual drive home.
- The individual must be assessed by a physician or nurse-practitioner with experience in concussion management, and may be referred to concussion-trained health care professionals for additional care (e.g. sport physiotherapists, athletic therapists, chiropractors).
- The individual **MUST** receive medical clearance by a physician or nurse-practitioner with experience in concussion management in order to return to skate/train/coach.

**SKATERS, COACHES AND PARENTS MUST NOT MAKE THE RETURN TO  
SKATE/TRAIN/COACH DECISION ON THEIR OWN, EVEN IF THE INDIVIDUAL'S  
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS RESOLVE**



**THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE  
SPECIFIC TO SKATE CANADA**

Based on the Concussion in Sport Group 2017 Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT-5)  
but are not endorsed by the Concussion in Sport Group.