



STEP 1: Identifying a suspected concussion and removal from play

- a) **What is a concussion?** A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a blow to the head or to another part of the body that causes the brain to move inside the skull. All players who experience any concussion signs and symptoms (*Figure 1*) following a blow to the head or another part of the body is considered to have a suspected concussion and must stop participation in the hockey activity immediately. A hockey activity is defined as any GTHL on-ice or off-ice team function.
- b) **A suspected concussion can be identified in three ways:**
 - i. Self-reported signs and symptoms – Even if only one symptom (*Figure 1*)
 - ii. Observed signs and symptoms from the team officials
 - iii. Peer-reported signs and symptoms from players, parents, and/or team officials
- c) **Who is responsible for removal from play?** If a suspected concussion occurs, it is the responsibility of all team officials (coach, assistant coach, trainer, assistant trainer, manager, assistant manager or executive member) to remove the player from participation in the hockey activity immediately. When present, team trainers hold the final decision to remove players with a suspected concussion. If there is doubt whether a concussion has occurred, it is to be assumed that it has. If in doubt, sit them out. ***If a player experiences a sudden onset of any of the “red flag symptoms”, 911 should be called immediately.** (*Figure 2*)

Figure 1: GENERAL CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS		
Headache	Feeling mentally foggy	Sensitive to light
Nausea	Feeling slowed down	Sensitive to noise
Dizziness	Difficulty concentrating	Irritability
Vomiting	Difficulty remembering	Sadness
Visual problems	Drowsiness	Nervous/anxious
Balance problems	Sleeping more/less than usual	More emotional
Numbness/tingling	Trouble falling asleep	Fatigue

Figure 2: RED FLAG SYMPTOMS	
Headaches that worsen	Can't recognize people or places
Seizures or convulsion	Increasing confusion or irritability
Repeated vomiting	Weakness/tingling/burning in arms or legs
Loss of consciousness	Persistent or increasing neck pain
Looks very drowsy/can't be awakened	Unusual behavioural change
Slurred speech	Focal neurologic signs (e.g. paralysis, weakness, etc.)

*McCorry P, Meeuwisse W, Johnston K et al. Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: [The 4th International Conference on concussion](#) in Sport Held in Zurich, Nov 2012. British Journal of Sports Medicine 2013 47: 250-258

*The 2016-2017 GTHL Concussion Protocol was made in collaboration with the GTHL Safety Committee and the Holland Bloorview Concussion Centre from the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital hollandbloorview.ca/concussion



STEP 2: Completion and submission of the *GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form (Page 5)*

- a) **Monitoring the player, and recommend seeing a medical professional:** Team trainers are responsible to monitor the player with a suspected concussion until a parent/guardian is contacted or on-site. Team trainers are also responsible to recommend to the individual's parent or guardian that they see a medical professional immediately. A medical professional includes a family physician, pediatrician, emergency room physician, sports-medicine physician, neurologist or nurse practitioner. **If no team trainer is present for 2(a) and 2(b) order of next most responsible individuals:*
- i. An individual with trainer certification
 - ii. Team head coach
- b) **Completion of the GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form:** Team trainers are responsible for completing the GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form immediately after a concussion is suspected.
- c) **Submission of the GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form:** If a suspected concussion occurs, the team trainer is responsible for completing and reviewing the *GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form* and giving one copy of the report to the individual's parents/guardian and another copy to the GTHL head offices (mfata@gthlcanada.com or Fax: 416- 636-2035). **If the form was completed by another individual with trainer certification or team head coach (as trainer was not present) the trainer is responsible for reviewing and submitting to GTHL head offices.*

STEP 3: Seeing a medical professional, obtaining appropriate diagnosis and documentation

- a) **Seeking a medical professional:** If a player has been deemed to have had suspected concussion, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to take the player to see a medical professional immediately.

A medical professional includes a family physician, pediatrician, emergency room physician, sports-medicine physician, neurologist or nurse practitioner.

***Documentation from any other source will not be acceptable.**

- b) **Obtaining appropriate diagnosis and documentation:** Written documentation must be obtained from one of the medical professionals listed above **if a concussion has occurred or not.**

STEP 4: Submission of medical documentation of concussion diagnosis

- a) **If a medical professional determines that the player with a suspected concussion did not have a concussion:**
- i. Parent/guardian must take the written documentation from the medical professional (highlighting that the player did not have a concussion), and give this document to the team trainer.

*McCorry P, Meeuwisse W, Johnston K et al. Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: [The 4th International Conference on Concussion](#) in Sport Held in Zurich, Nov 2012. British Journal of Sports Medicine 2013 47: 250-258

*The 2016-2017 GTHL Concussion Protocol was made in collaboration with the GTHL Safety Committee and the Holland Bloorview Concussion Centre from the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital hollandbloorview.ca/concussion



2016-2017 GTHL Concussion Policy

- ii. It is the responsibility of the team trainer to submit all documentation to the to the GTHL head offices before the player is permitted to return to a GTHL hockey activity (mfata@gthlcanada.com).
 - iii. Parent/guardian should continue to monitor the player for at **least 24-72 hours** after the event, as signs and symptoms may take hours or days to appear.
 - iv. Team trainers have the right to refuse a player to return to any GTHL hockey activity if they deem the player unfit to do so.
- b) If a medical professional determines that the player with a suspected concussion does have a concussion:**
- i. Parent/guardian must take the written documentation from the medical professional (highlighting that the player has been diagnosed with a concussion), along with the *GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form* to the team trainer
 - ii. It is the responsibility of the team trainer to submit all documentation indicating concussion diagnosis, in addition to the ***Hockey Canada Injury Report Form***, to the to the GTHL head offices (mfata@gthlcanada.com or Fax: 416- 636-2035).
 - iii. The player is to begin Step 1 of the *GTHL Return to Play Protocol*.

STEP 5: *GTHL Return to Play Protocol* (Page 7-10)

- a) The player with a concussion must complete each step of the *GTHL Return to Play Protocol*. Players in no body checking leagues are to follow the no body checking protocol (Page 7 & 8); players in body checking leagues are to follow the body checking protocol (Page 9 & 10).
- b) Parent/guardian and the player are responsible to ensure that each step of the *GTHL Return to Play Protocol* recommendations is followed appropriately and the required signatures are completed at each stage. Players must be able to participate in each step's activities for a **minimum of 24 hours without experiencing any symptoms during of after the activities BEFORE moving onto the next stage.**
- c) If the player experiences any symptoms during OR after the activities in any stage, the player should stop that activity immediately, rest for 24 hours and return to the previous successful stage before trying those activities again.
- d) Once Steps 1-5 of the *GTHL Return to Play Protocol* have been completed, the player must receive medical clearance to proceed to Step 6: Full Team Practice (body checking or no body checking). A player is not permitted to return to Step 6 until written permission by a medical professional. A medical profession for medical clearance includes a family physician, pediatrician, sports-medicine physician, neurologist or nurse practitioner. **Documentation from any other source will not be acceptable.**
- e) Once medical clearance for Step 6 is obtained, the parent/guardian must take the written documentation from the medical professional (highlighting player is safe to return to full team practice) and the completed *GTHL Return to Play Protocol* with signatures completed by parent, player and coach/trainer to the team trainer.

*McCorry P, Meeuwisse W, Johnston K et al. Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: [The 4th International Conference on concussion](#) in Sport Held in Zurich, Nov 2012. British Journal of Sports Medicine 2013 47: 250-258

*The 2016-2017 GTHL Concussion Protocol was made in collaboration with the GTHL Safety Committee and the Holland Bloorview Concussion Centre from the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital hollandbloorview.ca/concussion



2016-2017 GTHL Concussion Policy

- f) It is the responsibility of the team's trainer to submit medical clearance and *GTHL Return to Play Protocol* with signatures completed to the GTHL head offices.
- g) Team trainers have the right to refuse a player to return to any GTHL hockey activity if they deem the player unfit to do so.
- h) For more information of concussion management strategies please visit gthlcanada.com/concussions

Special Considerations:

This concussion policy aims to ensure that players with a concussion do not participate in GTHL hockey activities before medically cleared to do so. The above steps relate most directly to a player who sustains a concussion during a GTHL hockey activity and this injury is identified immediately. Not all concussions will be identified immediately and not all concussions will take place during GTHL hockey activities. Two alternative scenarios are presented below:

Scenario 1: A suspected concussion from a GTHL activity is not identified and/or reported until days or weeks after the GTHL activity. Enter at Step 2. Immediately upon the concussion being identified and/or reported to GTHL team officials, the team trainer is to complete the *GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form* and recommend that the player see a medical professional immediately.

Scenario 2: A player is diagnosed with a concussion from a non GTHL activity (i.e. school, other sports, non GTHL related games or training). Enter at Step 4. Upon receiving from parent/guardian, the trainer is to submit medical documentation to GTHL offices. As the concussion did not happen at the GTHL activity, no *GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form* is needed.

Referring Documents:

1. *GTHL Suspected Concussion Report Form* (Page 5)
2. *GTHL Concussion Policy Summary* (Page 6)
3. *GTHL Return to Play Protocol No Body Checking* (Page 7 & 8)
4. *GTHL Return to Play Protocol Body Checking* (Page 9 & 10)

*If you have any questions or concerns regarding the 2016-2017 GTHL Concussion Policy please contact the GTHL Office:

Phone: 416-636-6845

Email: mfata@gthlcanada.com

Fax: 416- 636-2035

This 2016-2017 GTHL Concussion Policy is available at gthlcanada.com/concussions

*McCorry P, Meeuwisse W, Johnston K et al. Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: [The 4th International Conference on concussion](http://www.bjmsports.com) in Sport Held in Zurich, Nov 2012. British Journal of Sports Medicine 2013 47: 250-258

*The 2016-2017 GTHL Concussion Protocol was made in collaboration with the GTHL Safety Committee and the Holland Bloorview Concussion Centre from the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital hollandbloorview.ca/concussion