

# GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

*Five gradual steps to help athletes safely return to play.*



*Patient cannot be taking any pain medications when they are enrolled in the Return To Play program as it can mask symptoms from the concussion.*

Steps		Symptom Free for Next 24 Hours?
<b>1</b>	<b>No Activity</b> (Recovery) Complete physical and cognitive rest until medical clearance.	<b>YES:</b> Begin Step 2 <b>NO:</b> Continue Resting
<b>2</b>	<b>Light Aerobic Exercise</b> (Increase Heart Rate) Ex. walking, swimming, stationary cycling.  <i>Heart Rate: &lt;70% Max. - 15min.</i>	<b>YES:</b> Move to Step 3 <b>NO:</b> Rest further until symptom free
<b>3</b>	<b>Sport Specific Exercise</b> (Add Movement) Ex. Skating drills (ice hockey), running drills (soccer). No head impact activities.  <i>Heart Rate: &lt;80% Max. - 45min.</i>	<b>YES:</b> Move to Step 4 <b>NO:</b> Return to Step 2 until symptom free
<b>4</b>	<b>Non-Contact Training Drills</b> (Increased Exercise, Coordination & Attention) Progress to complex training drills (ex. passing drills). May start resistance training.  <i>Heart Rate: &lt;90% Max. - 60min.</i>	<b>YES:</b> Move to Step 5 <b>NO:</b> Return to Step 3 until symptom free
<b>5</b>	<b>Full Contact Practice</b> (Restore confidence & assess functional skills) If symptom free, return to normal training activities.	<b>YES:</b> Return to Play <b>NO:</b> Return to Step 4 until symptom free

**Make sure to use the Return To Play card to track your progress. Please bring the card with you to all visits.**

*To calculate your maximum heart rate take 220 - your age and then multiply by the percentage. Example: 220 - 18 = 202. Then multiply 202 x .7 (70%) = 141.*

## Concussion Symptoms

Physical		Thinking	Emotional	Sleep
Headaches	Numbness/ Tingling	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Drowsiness
Sensitivity to light	Visual problems	Problems concentrating	Sadness	Sleeping more than usual
Nausea	Vomiting	Problems remembering	Feeling more emotional	Sleeping less than usual
Sensitivity to noise	Balance Problems	Feeling more slowed down	Nervousness	Trouble falling asleep
Fatigue	Dizziness			

Reference: Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich (2008), Br J of Sports Med 2009; 43: i76-i84 doi:10.1136/bjism.2009.058248

