

Concussion Awareness

The Four R's

1. Respect for all players, especially yourself
2. Read the **concussion card**
3. Recognize the symptoms of concussion
4. React to it

Prevention for Players

1. Respect all players, coaches and officials.
2. Make sure your hockey helmet fits and is fastened properly.
3. Be aware - play heads-up hockey.
4. Wear a properly fitted mouth guard.
5. Always use correct bodychecking techniques and never hit another player from behind or in the head.

ALERT - Repeat concussions can severely affect one's lifestyle. It is a Hockey Canada Policy not to send a player back on the ice unless that player has fully recovered

Coach and Safety Person Protocol

1. Keep your concussion card handy.
2. During the pre-game talk, check and remind players of team attitude.
3. Discourage open-ice checks to the head.
4. In case of injury, check for symptoms of concussion/neck and spinal injuries.
5. Monitor the player for listed symptoms, if present remove the player from the game.
6. Permit the player to return to play only on advice of a physician.
7. Instruct parents/guardians to inform medical personnel if it is a repeat concussion.

Concussion Victims Speak Out!

Nick Kypreos - NHL Hockey Player

"I had suffered multiple concussions and no longer needed to take continued risk. I had to think of my future. I was considered a role player, a physical player in the National Hockey League and I knew there were consequences".

"You give your lumps, you take your lumps". Nick Kypreos didn't count on the career-ending concussion he suffered in a fight during an exhibition game against the New York Rangers. "I lost my helmet and hit my head on the ice. It's like a dream you can't remember. Within one hour everything started to come back into focus. I was being asked how I was feeling and if I could go back on the ice to finish the game".

"Players should not be asked that question. They're too emotional to answer. You just want everyone to forget it ever happened...to keep playing hockey. Since I was seven-years-old, I've been told to 'shake it off', 'dust off the cobwebs', 'suck it up' and you'll be fine". Unfortunately he found out that that is not always true. "The days of sniffing smelling salts are over", he said. "You can see a knee or a shoulder injury but you can't see a head injury, so there is always the question of 'how hurt is he?'".

"Only a doctor should decide when the player can return to the game"; Nick Kypreos says team officials must learn how to recognize a concussion and there should be a specific protocol to follow when any player is injured.

David Clarkson

David suffered a concussion at the Ontario championship in 1998. "I don't remember anything that happened. I slipped and (can only) remember waking up".

Dan Nicolletti - Junior B Hockey Player

"I remember the player skating away and seeing six of him", he said of his first concussion. "I went into the boards and was hit from the right side".

"The player had his elbows up high and clipped my head and not my body. I remember feeling dizzy but you just want to keep playing and shake it off. I had a dent in my helmet... I changed it, talked to the trainer and went back in the game. I didn't want to miss any ice time so I finished the game". But Dan was hit hard again and following the game, on the way home, talked of hearing a phone ringing. He played one week later and was hit again on the right side of his head. His dream of becoming a professional player was over before it began.

Melanie McFarlane - Senior C Hockey Player

Melanie too had a concussion but went back into the game and then played again the next day only to suffer a second concussion. "Nobody told me not to play and I didn't realize I shouldn't be playing. It was an elbow to the side of the head. Nobody saw it happen. I just sat there and the rink was spinning around..."

Sheri Maisonneuve - Midget Hockey Player

"There is no bodychecking in women's hockey", she said. "I've never been taught how to take a hit. I was trying out for Team Ontario at an evaluation camp. I was in front of the net and someone kicked my feet out from under me. My head hit first". She told officials she was fine but now admits she couldn't really see properly couldn't focus on the puck but tried to stay in position so she wouldn't lose her opportunity for evaluation.