



CONCUSSION: SILENT EPIDEMIC IN YOUTH SPORT
New online training course by ThinkFirst Canada can protect young players from serious long term health consequences

Toronto, ON, December 15, 2011 - ThinkFirst Concussion Education Online is now immediately accessible to Canadians, thanks to the collaborative efforts of ThinkFirst Pensez d'Abord Canada and Safe Communities Canada, two not-for-profit organizations dedicated to injury prevention. Dr. Charles Tator, founder of ThinkFirst Canada and widely known for his strong public profile on brain injury and sport, celebrates this launch as an opportunity to provide comprehensive online concussion education, accessible across Canada.

Dr. Charles Tator notes, "The decisions made following an impact to the head are extremely important and too often we see young players being left in the game when they should be removed and assessed by a physician. Also, some players return to play before they have fully recovered from a concussion."

Now, parents, teachers, coaches, trainers and youth athletes can learn more about concussion prevention by taking ThinkFirst Concussion Education Online. Course content is based on material reviewed by ThinkFirst Canada's Concussion Education and Awareness Committee, a group which includes neurosurgeons, researchers, and leaders in sport-injury prevention. The course can be completed in less than an hour, from any location, with technical support available 24/7. Participants who pass the course test can download and print a Certificate of Completion.

Misunderstanding about the nature of concussion can result in unsafe choices for player health, and lead to more serious, long-term health consequences. A concussion is a brain injury and education is a key component to protecting young athletes' health. This includes learning how to recognize a concussion as well as how to properly manage a safe and healthy return to play. This online initiative, in addition to ThinkFirst Canada's concussion education resources, will help parents, coaches, trainers and teachers to gain the knowledge and confidence to make appropriate in-the-moment decisions and the understand the return to play protocol for concussion - *everytime*, in *every* sport.

Both ThinkFirst Canada and Safe Communities Canada believe that Canadians want to learn more about preventing injury and that they will take the personal initiative to take concussion training if it is affordable and convenient. "Build it and they will come" is more than the catch phrase from an old baseball movie. It is the heartfelt belief of two organizations dedicated to injury prevention.

ThinkFirst.ca before you play and return to play.

About ThinkFirst Pensez d'Abord Canada

ThinkFirst Pensez d'Abord Canada is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of brain and spinal cord injuries. ThinkFirst has been advocating for heightened public awareness through education since its inception in 1992. ThinkFirst has Chapters in every province across the country that spread the ThinkFirst injury prevention message. ThinkFirst teaches school-aged children and youth, sports teams, and community volunteers, to safely participate in the activities they enjoy.

ThinkFirst's message is promoted through advocacy for healthy policies, as well as participation in a number of coalitions that raise injury prevention awareness in communities across the country. ThinkFirst is committed to providing up-to-date research on the causes of injury and the effectiveness of injury prevention programs to ensure the information provided is both timely and relevant. Building on its extensive community- and medical- based networks; ThinkFirst will contribute to creating awareness as well as developing community capacity building resources that will educate children, youth, parents and medical practitioners about brain injury and concussion prevention and treatment.

About Safe Communities Canada

Safe Communities Canada is a national community focused charitable organization dedicated to making Canada the safest country in the world to live, learn, work and play. Its role is to connect, inform and mobilize Canadians through its growing network of over 60 designated Safe Communities, its cross-sectoral partnerships and through its online training and awareness outreach. In the past 6 years, over a half million young Canadians have completed its web-based *Passport to Safety* workplace safety awareness programme. Concussion education is its latest not for profit partnership effort, following just five weeks after the launch of its Passport to Farm Safety program. It also provides individuals, businesses and community groups with access to a broad range of health and safety training courses through its online campus at www.safecommunities.ca. Safe Communities Canada is both an Affiliate Support Centre and an accredited International Safe Community Certifying Centre by The World Health Organization's Collaborating Center for Community Safety Promotion.

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