

ThinkFirst-SportSmart
Concussion Education and Awareness Program

New Concussion Management Guidelines

Dear Doctor,

Sport-related concussion is a common presenting problem for primary care physicians, who are increasingly being asked to assess and manage concussed patients, and to provide guidance on safe return to play. In fact, the Greater Toronto Hockey League now requires signed clearance from a physician before a player can return to play after a concussion. It is very likely that other leagues, and sports, will soon follow. In addition, concussion does not only occur in collision sports like hockey, but in many other sports and activities. ***It is, therefore, critical that physicians possess current concussion management skills.***

Many physicians have indicated that they do not feel they have sufficient knowledge, or access to appropriate resources to help them manage their concussed patients. Unfortunately, complicating matters further is that many aspects of concussion remain somewhat confusing or controversial. Grading systems (and associated return to play times) are not based on scientific evidence, and are considered obsolete by concussion experts. How, then, should a physician deal with a concussed patient?

ThinkFirst/Pensez D'Abord Canada, a national brain and spinal cord injury prevention program, and its subsidiary, ThinkFirst-SportSmart Sports and Recreational Injuries Research and Prevention Centre (ThinkFirst-SportSmart), are pleased to provide you with this practical, "state of the art" concussion assessment, management, and return to play information. Our new concussion card was developed by Drs. Karen Johnston and Charles Tator. It is adapted from the guidelines developed by the Canadian Academy Of Sport Medicine, and from the "Vienna Guidelines" (a consensus of experts in the field of sport-related concussion, developed at an international symposium in November 2001. These latter guidelines have been endorsed by the International Olympic Committee Medical Commission, the International Ice Hockey Federation, and FIFA (world soccer governing body). Enclosed with this letter is a concussion question and answer document for physicians developed by Dr. Jamie Kissick on behalf of the ThinkFirst-SportSmart Concussion Education and Awareness Committee.

In addition to the information provided here, further information will be easily available on the ThinkFirst web site (www.thinkfirst.ca) in the very near future.

This information will include:

- a question and answer document going into more detail on assessment, management, and return to play;
- the Standardized Assessment of Concussion Form;
- the McGill ACE;
- a concussion document for elite athletes; and
- a concussion card for the general public entitled "Understand Concussions: What Everyone Should Know About Concussions."

We hope that you will find this information helpful in your management of sport-related concussion. You will be instrumental in helping your patient recover, and to guiding them to a safe return to activity.

Yours sincerely,



Jamie Kissick, M.D.



James Carson, M.D.



Charles Tator, M.D.

On Behalf of the ThinkFirst-SportSmart Concussion Education and Awareness Committee

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