

MEXICO CENTRAL SCHOOL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

Most injuries will be simple concussions and such injuries recover spontaneously over several days. In these situations it is expected that the athlete will proceed rapidly through the stepwise return to play strategy.

During this period of recovery, in the first few days after an injury, it is important to emphasize to the athlete that physical and cognitive rest is required. Activities that require concentration and attention may make the symptoms worse and can even delay the recovery.

When an athlete shows **ANY** signs or symptoms of a concussion:

1. The athlete will not be allowed to return to play in the current game or practice.
2. The athlete should not be left alone, and regular monitoring for deterioration is essential over the initial few hours after an injury'
3. The athlete must be medically evaluated following the injury.
4. Return to Play must follow a medically supervised stepwise process.

The cornerstone of proper concussion management is rest until all symptoms resolve and then follow a graded program of exertion before returning to a sport. The return to play program is broken down into six steps in which only one step is covered each day, The return to play after a diagnosis of concussion follows a step wise process:

1. No activity, complete rest. Once asymptomatic, proceed to level 2.
2. Light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary cycling, no resistance training.
3. Sport specific exercise- for example skating in hockey, running in field sports
4. Non contact training drills
5. Full contact training
6. Game play

With this stepwise progression, the athlete should proceed to the next level daily as long as he remains asymptomatic at the current level. (without medication intervention) . If any post concussion symptoms occur, the patient needs to wait 24 hours and then try and restart at the last successful level. There should never be more than one level attempted in any single 24 period.

In cases of complex concussion, the rehabilitation will be more prolonged, and return to play advice will be managed by physicians with a specific expertise in management of such injuries.