

CONCUSSION GUIDELINES



BRITISH
DODGEBALL

IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!

All concussions must be taken seriously to safeguard the health and welfare of sports people. The following guidance is intended to provide information on how to recognise concussion and how concussion should be managed from the time of injury through to the safe return to play.

WHAT IS CONCUSSION?

Concussion is a brain injury caused by a blow to the head or body which leads to shaking of the brain. Concussion results in a disturbance in brain function that can affect a person's thinking, memory, mood, behaviour and level of consciousness. It can produce a wide range of physical symptoms and signs such as headache, dizziness and unsteadiness. Concussion often occurs without loss of consciousness. Most concussions recover with a period of physical and mental rest.

The Following Guidelines for Concussion are advised by the Sport & Recreation Alliance, National Governing Bodies of Sport, The Sports Councils, the Youth Sport Trust and Medical Professionals.

At all levels in all sports, if an athlete is suspected of having a concussion, they must be immediately removed from play. **IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT.**

WHO IS AT RISK?

Concussions can happen at any age. However, children and those aged 18 and under are more susceptible to concussion, take longer to recover, have more significant memory and mental processing issues and are more susceptible to rare and dangerous neurological complications, including death caused by a single or second impact.

A history of previous concussion increases the risk of further concussions, which may take longer to recover.

ONSET OF SYMPTOMS

The first symptoms of concussion can present at any time, but typically appear within the first 24-48 hours following a head injury.

ASSESSING CONCUSSION

Any head injury should be assessed for concussion by a trained first aider. In the event this is not possible, then a non-first aider should follow the steps below.

Any head injuries must be recorded on our [Head Injury Reporting Form](#) which will help us to better understand the frequency, severity and risk of concussions in dodgeball so that we can ensure the sports remains safe for all. This includes head injuries occurring at club training sessions and in casual settings where dodgeball is being played.

RECOGNISING CONCUSSION

After a fall or impact, concussion should be suspected in the presence of, or following, any one or more of the following:

- Symptoms e.g. headache, dizziness, nausea
- Physical signs e.g. unsteadiness, loss of consciousness/responsiveness
- Impaired brain function e.g. being dazed, confusion, memory loss
- Abnormal behaviour e.g. change in personality

DANGER SIGNS:

- Deteriorating conscious state (more drowsy)
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Severe or increasing headache
- Repeated vomiting
- Unusual behaviour change
- Seizure or convulsion
- Double or blurred vision
- Weakness, tingling or burning in limbs
- Midline or severe neck pain
- Increasing or persistent difficulty with walking normally or poor balance

IF A PLAYER IS EXPERIENCING ANY OF THE ABOVE DANGER SIGNS - CALL 999

It is important to realise that the signs and symptoms of concussion may only last a matter of seconds or minutes and can easily be missed – IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT.

IMMEDIATE MANAGEMENT OF A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION

Anyone with a suspected concussion should be IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PLAY.

- Once safely removed from play, they must not return to activity that day.
- If a neck injury is suspected, the player should only be removed by emergency healthcare professionals with appropriate spinal care training.
- Team mates, coaches, match officials, team managers, administrators or parents who suspect someone may have concussion must do their best to ensure that they are removed from play in a safe manner.
- In all cases of suspected concussion, it is recommended that the player is referred to a medical or healthcare professional for diagnosis and advice, even if the symptoms resolve.
- Any players with any symptoms following a head injury must be removed from playing or training and must not return to activity until all symptoms have cleared. Specifically, they must not return to play on the day of any suspected concussion.
- At all British Dodgeball events, staff have a duty of care towards players and participants. Staff therefore have the right to stop individuals from participating further in events where there is evidence of a concussion or other injury.

SUSPECTED CONCUSSION? – QUESTIONS TO ASK

These should be tailored to the particular activity and event, but failure to answer any of the questions correctly may suggest a concussion. Examples with alternatives include:

- “What venue are we at today?”
or “Where are we now?”
- “Which half is it now?”
or “Approximately what time of day is it?”
- “Who won the last set?”
or “How did you get to here today?”
- “What team did you play last match?”
or “Where were you on this day last week?”
- “Did your team win the last set?”
or “What were you doing this time last week?”

ONGOING MANAGEMENT

To ensure complete recovery, it is recommended that even once symptom free, an adult has a rest period for a minimum of 7 days. For a child, the rest period should be for a minimum of 14 days from the injury. During this time, they should rest from exercise, activities with a predictable risk of further head injury, and prolonged reading and use of television, computer, video games and smart phones. If symptoms return, reduce the levels of provoking activity, and re-introduce them more gradually.

Anyone with a concussion or suspected concussion should not:

- Be left alone in the first 24 hours.
- Consume alcohol in the first 24 hours, and thereafter should avoid alcohol until free of all concussion symptoms.
- Drive a motor vehicle and should not return to driving until provided with medical or healthcare professional clearance or, if no medical or healthcare professional advice is available, should not drive until free of all concussion symptoms.

RETURNING TO PLAY

After the minimum rest period outlined above, and if symptom free following a concussion, a player may return to play following the advice of a medical or healthcare professional.