



# CONCUSSION SAFETY



## **About Rowan's Law**

Rowan's Law was named for Rowan Stringer, a high school rugby player from Ottawa, who died in the spring of 2013 from a condition known as second impact syndrome (swelling of the brain caused by a subsequent injury that occurred before a previous injury healed). Rowan is believed to have experienced three concussions over six days while playing rugby. She had a concussion but didn't know her brain needed time to heal. Neither did her parents, teachers or coaches.

Rowan's Law and Rowan's Law Day were established to honour her memory and bring awareness to concussions and concussion safety. In honour of the memory of Rowan Stringer, 'Rowan's Law Day' is commemorated in Ontario on the last Wednesday in September to raise awareness about concussions in sports.

## **About Concussions**

A concussion is a brain injury. It can't be seen on X-rays, CT scans or MRIs. It may affect the way a person thinks, feels and acts.

Any blow to the head, face or neck may cause a concussion. A concussion may also be caused by a blow to the body if the force of the blow causes the brain to move around inside the skull. A concussion can happen to anyone – anywhere – including: at home, school or your workplace; following a car, bike or pedestrian accident like the one stated on [leppardlaw.com/](http://leppardlaw.com/); from participating in games, sports or other physical activity.

A concussion is a serious injury. While the effects are typically short-term, a concussion can lead to long-lasting symptoms and even long-term effects.

There are many signs and symptoms of a concussion to look out for, including: headache, dizziness, ringing in the ears, memory loss, nausea, light sensitivity, drowsiness, and depression.

If you notice signs of a concussion in others, or experience any of these symptoms yourself, consult with a physician or nurse practitioner.

## **Know The Risks**

You can get a concussion even if you don't black out or lose consciousness. [Slip and fall](#) can also increase concussion risk, especially in:

- young children
- senior citizens

## **Take Time To Heal**

It is important to take time and heal if you have a concussion.

In some cases, concussions or repeat concussions can result in:

- swelling of the brain
- permanent brain damage
- death

## **Requirements For Sports Organizations**

Ontario is a national leader in concussion management and prevention. Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018 makes it mandatory for sport organizations to:

Ensure that athletes under 26 years of age, parents of athletes under 18, coaches, team trainers and officials confirm every year that they have reviewed Ontario's Concussion Awareness Resources.

Establish a Concussion Code of Conduct that sets out rules of behaviour to support concussion prevention.

## **Establish a Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport Protocol**

The new rules requiring the review of Concussion Awareness Resources and Concussion Codes of Conduct came into effect on July 1, 2019.

The rules for removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols are expected to be in place by January 1, 2022.

1. Ensure that athletes under 26 years of age, parents of athletes under 18, coaches, team trainers and officials confirm every year that they have reviewed Ontario's Concussion Awareness Resources.

## **Establish a Concussion Code of Conduct that sets out rules of behaviour to support concussion prevention.**

The purpose of this Concussion Policy and Code of Conduct is to increase education and awareness for coaches, parents/guardians, players, officials, managers and other team or club members on the signs and symptoms of concussion and the specific protocols for managing concussions.

This Concussion Policy and Code of Conduct aims to 1) ensure that players with a suspected concussion are removed-from-sport and seek medical assessment and 2) all players with a suspected and/or diagnosed concussion do not participate in any basketball activities before medically cleared to return to basketball.

This Concussion Policy and Code of Conduct applies to coaches and team trainers of all teams, to all athletes and to parents/guardians of participants.

## **Removal-from-Sport and Return-to-Sport protocol.**

Effective January 1, 2022, [Rowan's Law – Concussion Safety \(Phase 2\)](#) came into effect in the province of Ontario. Phase 2 requires all sport organizations to establish removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols for concussion management.

## **Making Head Way Concussion eLearning Series**

All of our Coaches and club members are encouraged to complete the Coaching Association of Canada's concussion eLearning module, [Making Head Way in Sport](#).

This is a free learning module which teaches coaches how to recognize a suspected concussion and what steps to take if one of your players sustains a suspected concussion during a practice, game or workout. To access this webinar, coaches will need an NCCP number and a Locker account.

[Access 'Making Head Way in Sport'](#)

## **Additional Resources**

Parachute Canada has created and compiled a number of concussion resources, including: Concussion guides for parents, coaches and trainers, parents and caregivers; Return-to-school strategy, return-to-sport strategy, return-to-work strategy; and concussion awareness education toolkits.

[Parachute Canada – Injury Topics – Concussion Concussion Recognition Tool 5 © \(CRT5\) Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 5 \(SCAT5\)](#)

[Concussion Protocol Resources for Sport Organizations](#)

[Concussion & You – A Handbook for Parents & Kids](#) – Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital