



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT



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Be headstrong about concussions

York Region’s “Not OK? Don’t Play” campaign gives residents a heads up

NEWMARKET – The Regional Municipality of York is helping residents understand the seriousness of concussions this spring with the “Not OK? Don’t Play” campaign. It’s okay to be headstrong about some things in life, including prevention and treatment of traumatic brain injuries known as concussions.

Concussions are caused by excessive, rapid movement of the brain inside the skull, often resulting from a blow to the head, neck or face or body sending force to the head. The impact causes damage that changes brain cell function leading to short and long-term symptoms that can be physical, cognitive or emotional.

Concussions often occur in athletes, including school-age, who play sports with increased likelihood of headshots such as hockey, football and soccer. According to Think First Canada, a national organization dedicated to the prevention of brain and spinal cord injuries, four out of five athletes do not know they are concussed and often return to play too soon, risking more serious injury and potentially longer recovery.

Symptoms of a concussion may include dizziness, nausea, headache, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, memory problems, confusion, anxiousness and depression. A person does not need to lose consciousness to experience a concussion.

If an athlete shows signs or symptoms of a concussion, here’s what you can do to help:

- Remove them from play immediately
- Do not allow them to return to the game or practice
- Do not leave them alone and monitor for ongoing symptoms

People suffering from a concussion should seek immediate medical attention, including a full neurological exam. Once an athlete has had physical and cognitive rest for several days and is symptom free, a medically-supervised return to play protocol can begin.

During recovery, sports and other physical activities must be avoided until the injured athlete receives medical clearance to safely return to play. Activities such as reading, texting, television, computer work and electronic games must be limited to allow for cognitive rest. Recovery is important in eliminating the chance of long-term health effects, including memory problems, irritability, personality changes, depression and dementia.

For more information on this or any other public health-related program, please contact **York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, TTY 1-866-252-9933** or www.york.ca/injuryprevention

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Founded in 1971, The Regional Municipality of York is made up of nine municipalities and provides services to nearly 1.1 million residents and 28,000 businesses that employ 516,000 people

