



### **Hockey Eastern Ontario Significant Injury Return to Play Policy**

HEO defines Significant Injury as any injury that a player sustains (except Concussion) that requires the player to be absent from hockey for a period of greater than one week. Examples are, but not limited to, broken bones, severe sprains or strains, major lacerations, respiratory incidents, etc. Concussion is excluded from this policy as it has its own policy and protocols. HEO will utilize the Hockey Canada Six – Step method for return to play for Concussion, as the baseline for this policy. After a significant injury has occurred the team Trainer with the injured player, parents/guardians and medical professionals will determine the best course of action. The trainer will be kept apprised of any and all changes in the player's condition and the player WILL BE unfit to play until assessed by a Physician. No player can return to play until the attending Physician has given the player clearance to do so in writing. The trainer's decision is final and cannot be overturned by the Coaching staff or the Parents until the Return to Play criteria has been met.

### **Return to Play Process**

The return to play process is gradual, or as mandated by medical protocols and begins after a doctor has given the player clearance to return to activity. If in the rehabilitation phase for return to play the player experiences any pain or symptoms, the player must be re-evaluated by a physician. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, and not necessarily when exercising!

**Step 1:** No activity, only complete rest, as determined by the appropriate medical protocols. Proceed to step 2 as advised by health professionals.

**Step 2:** Light aerobic exercise, such as walking or stationary cycling.  
Monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting.

**Step 3:** Sport specific activities and training (e.g. skating).

**Step 4:** Drills without body contact. May add light resistance training and progress to heavier weights.  
The time needed to progress from non-contact to contact exercise will vary with the severity of the injury and the player.

**Only go to step 5 after medical clearance. (Reassessment and note)**

**Step 5:** Begin drills with body contact.

**Step 6:** Game play. (The earliest a concussed athlete should return to play is one week).

**Note:** Players should proceed through return to play steps only when they do not experience any pain or symptoms and the physician has given clearance. Each step should be a minimum of one day. As a policy this is to be utilized as a guideline/protocol. Significant injuries happen and are as unique as individual players. As an example - rehabilitation time for severe sprains/strains, will vary depending upon the players own physical attributes as well as his/her availability for rehabilitation services.

**Never return to play if symptoms persist!**

