



CLINICAL NEWS

Evening the Odds on Concussions

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Evening the Odds on Concussions

The Children's Neurotrauma and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Programs aim to improve awareness and ensure timely management of concussions

Two weeks after his concussion, Sébastien came to the Emergency Department of the Montreal Children's Hospital (MCH) of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC). He was nauseous, complaining of headaches, and fatigue. Needless to say, his parents were concerned. This was Sébastien's fourth concussion and he had recovered faster previously.

According to Debbie Friedman, Trauma Director at the MCH, a concussion may result in a variety of symptoms that can appear immediately, hours later or even the following day. "A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury. For the first one to two weeks, resting is the only way to recover. Cumulative effects may result if a subsequent concussion happens in a short time."

The MCH Neurotrauma and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Programs see hundreds of patients each year with sports-related concussions. They have been working for over a decade on improving the awareness, management and prevention of these and other types of injuries. The program has been expanded to include the Concussion Clinic, which has a stream specifically dedicated to children and teens who are athletes. "We encourage their physical activity, while emphasizing the importance of safety," says Ms. Friedman. "It's a balance. It is important to never play through an injury."

To help parents, coaches, teachers, and athletes better understand concussions and their impact, the MCH trauma experts have developed the Concussion KiT as an education tool. Brochures and guidelines have also been distributed to the medical and athletic community. The MCH trauma website (www.thechildren.com/trauma) is also an excellent source of trauma-related information.

"Our aim is to increase awareness of the seriousness of concussions," says Ms. Friedman. "If concussions are not recognized and managed properly, the consequences can be significant and long lasting."

For more information:
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Traumatic Brain Injury Programs**
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