

# HEAD SAFE Q&A

## What is Head Safe?

Scouts Canada and Hydro One are partnering for the very first time to launch Head Safe—a hands-on educational program for youth and families aimed at raising awareness, preventing and managing concussions and head-related injuries.

Launching in the fall of 2019, Head Safe will educate youth on head injury first aid, how to respond to real-life scenarios and understand key preventative measures by offering free training.

## Why Head Safe?

Although concussions frequently result from a fall or impact during sport or recreational activities, few people know how to treat and manage head-related injuries. According to the Government of Canada, half of Canadians have little or no knowledge about concussions, while one in four Canadians don't know how a concussion is treated and only 15 per cent can correctly identify the best treatments for a concussion.

Head Safe addresses the importance of educating youth on head safety awareness and injury prevention. Through training to recognize the symptoms of a concussion as well as preventative measures to avoid and respond appropriately to head-related injuries, youth will be equipped to live and play safely.

## Who will the program benefit?

The program will launch in Scouting groups across Canada this fall. Scouts Canada and Hydro One will also offer free training to 500 community members through Head Safe Training Events, while also providing youth, volunteers and families in over 25,000 households with essential educational tools.

## What are the Head Safe Community Events?

The free public community events will teach youth first aid for head injuries, important prevention measures and role play on how to respond to real-life scenarios. They will also learn how to recognize the early symptoms of a concussion, what to do if they suspect they or someone else has a concussion, and the six steps of when it is safe to return to play, with appropriate medical clearance.

## Who can attend the Head Safe Community Events?

The free community events are open to non-Scouting youth ages 5–26 and their families.

## Where will the Head Safe Community Events take place?

The free community training events will take place in five communities across Ontario. The locations and additional details will be announced later this summer.

## What is a concussion?

Concussions are a traumatic brain injury caused by a blow to the head or neck, or a jarring impact that causes the brain to move inside the skull. Concussions affect the way a person feels, behaves and remembers. Symptoms often last for 10 days to a month but can remain for months or even years.

## Who can get a concussion?

Approximately 465 Canadians suffer from a head injury daily, resulting in one injury every three minutes.

Youth and seniors are the most susceptible to head injuries, resulting in more severe short and long-term effects as well as prolonged physical and mental recovery.

## Prevention

Depending on the activity, there are several ways to prevent concussions and head-related injuries. Helmets are one of the most important pieces of safety equipment to prevent or decrease the severity of head injury during outdoor activities like cycling or inline skating. Other preventative methods include educating youth on proper techniques to limit falls and injuries, identifying potential hazards in the surrounding area and increasing awareness of the dangers of head-related injuries.



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## What are common symptoms of a concussion?

Each person experiences a head injury differently with symptoms lasting a couple of days to a couple of weeks, months or even years. A doctor can determine the degree of intensity of an injury and provide important instructions to follow. Common concussion symptoms are:

- Headache or pressure in the head
- Sensitivity to noise, light, motion and odors
- Drowsiness
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Feeling emotional or irritable
- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Neck pain
- Inability to concentrate
- Difficulty remembering facts or events from earlier in the day

## What to do if a concussion is suspected?

If a concussion is suspected, stop all activity, treat any swelling with ice and seek medical advice immediately. A person with a suspected concussion shouldn't be left alone and an ambulance should be called if they lose consciousness.

## How long can it take for a concussion to heal?

Everybody experiences concussions differently. The recovery time for a concussion varies depending on the severity of the injury. A doctor's progressive plan and following the six steps to Return to Play is the fastest and most effective way to ease someone back into a routine.

## What is Return to Play?

Return to Play is a six-step approach designed by head injury experts to ease the transition back to normal activities from a concussion or a head-related injury. For those suffering from a head injury, it is important to immediately rest and limit physical and mentally-straining activities, as it will impact the road to recovery.

## What are the steps to safely return to play?

### Step 1: No activity and complete rest.

Rest 24 to 48 hours following a concussion. Once cleared by a doctor, proceed to step 2.

### Step 2: Light exercise

Once the symptoms are gone, take part in light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary cycling for 10–15 minutes at a time to ease the transition into recovery.

### Step 3: Specific aerobic activity

Increase aerobic movement to activities like hiking or jogging for 20–30 minutes at a time. There should be no activities that involve body contact, like team sports.

### Step 4: Return to low key activities

Gradually return to low key activities with no body contact or potential for head impacts (i.e. no dodgeball, soccer).

### Step 5: Monitored activity

Youth who have been cleared by a doctor can take part fully in regular activities but should be closely monitored during and after for symptoms.

### Step 6: Full return to full physical activities

The rate progression through these stages will vary, but each stage must take at least 24 hours. If any symptoms of a concussion reoccur during any of the steps, return to rest until they are gone and return to the previous stage of activity. It is important to take the time to completely heal to reduce the possibility of getting another concussion or permanent damage.

## Where can I learn more?

For additional information about Head Safe, as well as more information about prevention and responding to head injuries, visit [Scouts.ca/PlaySafe](http://Scouts.ca/PlaySafe).



Play Safe. Live Safe.  
[Scouts.ca/PlaySafe](http://Scouts.ca/PlaySafe) #HeadSafe



It starts with Scouts.