



## **Irish Pony Club Concussion Rule for All Disciplines**

In the case of a head injury, or other injury likely to cause concussion the following applies:

Concussion – mandatory 21 day suspension from all Irish Pony Club activities which involve riding.

Suspected concussion – the competitor must be re examined by the medical staff or a paramedic after 30 minutes. If concussion is confirmed or still suspected, mandatory 21 day suspension applies.

If the competitor is not examined for any reason, mandatory 21 day suspension will apply.

A Concussion Advice Form should be supplied to the parent or guardian of the competitor, by the official in charge of the event.

If a competitor is taken to hospital from an event or advised to attend hospital for assessment or treatment, minimum 21 days mandatory suspension will apply in respect of concussion or other head injury.

The day of the injury counts as the first day of the suspension period.

A competitor who is suspended due to concussion may not compete or ride any horse, in any capacity at any Irish Pony Club competition or activity until he/she provides written confirmation from a Registered Medical Practitioner that he/she is fit to resume riding.

# Concussion Action Plan

## What should I do when a head injury is suspected?

### 1. Remove the rider from the lesson/rally/competition.

Look for signs and symptoms of concussion if the rider has experienced a blow to the head. When in doubt, sit them out!

### 2. Ensure that the rider is evaluated by an appropriate health care professional.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. As an instructor/parent/DC, the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the rider after the injury:

- Cause of the injury and force of the blow to the head
- Any loss of consciousness and if so, for how long
- Any memory loss immediately following the injury
- Any seizures immediately following the injury
- Any vomiting
- Number of previous concussions(if any)

### 3. Inform the rider's Parents or Guardian

Let them know about the possible concussion and give them the Concussion Form. This can help parents to monitor the rider for signs or symptoms that appear or get worse once the rider is at home.

### 4. Keep the rider out of the saddle

A rider should be removed from the activity on the day of the injury and until they are symptom free and an appropriate health care professional gives them the all clear. After you remove a rider with a suspected concussion from activity, the decision about return to riding is a medical decision.

## Signs and Symptoms of Concussion

### Signs observed by Instructor/onlooker

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about course/exercise
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of score
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness – even briefly
- Shows mood, behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to fall
- Can't recall events after fall

### Symptoms reported by the rider

- Headache or 'pressure' in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just 'not feeling right'

### What are Concussion Danger

#### Signs?

#### Why be concerned

***Call an ambulance or take the rider to A&E immediately if after a fall the rider exhibits one or more of the following danger signs:***

- ***One pupil larger than the other***
- ***Is drowsy or cannot be wakened***
- ***A headache that gets worse***
- ***Weakness, numbness or decreased coordination***
- ***Vomiting***
- ***Slurred speech***
- ***Does not recognize people or places***
- ***Becomes increasingly, confused, restless or agitated***
- ***Exhibits unusual behavior***
- ***Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)***

#### about concussion?

Most riders with a concussion will recover fully and quickly. But for some riders, signs and symptoms of concussion can last days, weeks or longer.

If a rider has a concussion his or her brain needs time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first - usually within a short time period - can slow recovery or increase the chances of long term problems.

In rare cases repeat concussions can result in brain swelling causing permanent brain damage or death.

#### References

Lovell MR et al. Grade 1 or "ding" concussions in high school athletes. American Journal of Sports Medicine  
 Institute of Medicine Workshop on Neuropsychological Consequences of Head Impact in Youth Soccer  
 CDC Sports related recurrent brain injuries US  
 Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Guidelines