


BALLYMORE EUSTACE GAA & LGFA

# Concussion & Injury Guide

What every player, parent and coach needs to know – including how to claim from the Injury Fund

Ballymore Eustace GAA & LGFA · Bishopslane, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare

# Concussion: if in doubt, sit them out

Concussion is a brain injury. It must always be taken seriously to protect the short- and long-term health of every player.

It can be caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head **or the body**. A player does not need to be knocked out to be concussed. Signs can appear straight away or develop over minutes, hours or even days.

### Signs you might see

- Lying still or slow to get up
- Unsteady on their feet, poor balance
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Confused, not aware of plays or events
- Holding their head
- Loss of consciousness (even briefly)

### Symptoms they might report

- Headache or "pressure in the head"
- Dizziness, nausea or vomiting
- Blurred vision, sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling "in a fog" or slowed down
- Trouble concentrating or remembering
- More emotional, irritable or anxious

### Call 999 / 112 straight away if a player has:

neck pain or tenderness · weakness, tingling or burning in arms or legs · a severe or worsening headache · a seizure · repeated vomiting · loss of consciousness · increasing confusion, restlessness or agitation · double vision

## What happens at training or a match

1. Any player suspected of concussion is **removed from play immediately**.
2. They **do not return to play that day**, even if they say they feel fine.
3. They should not be left alone, and should not drive.
4. Parents are told, and the player should see a doctor.

# Returning to play after concussion

Children and teenagers take longer to recover than adults. Under the GAA's Concussion Management Guidelines:

- Players **under 18** should not return to full-contact training or matches for **at least 14 days** from diagnosis.
- The same minimum of 14 days is recommended for **all female players, of any age**.
- Return happens through a **Graduated Return to Play (GRTP)**, step by step. A player only moves to the next step if they have no symptoms.
- A **graduated return to school** comes first. Players should be back at school or study without symptoms before returning to sport.

| Step | Activity |
|---|---|
| 1 | Rest – physical and mental, until symptoms settle |
| 2 | Light exercise – walking, exercise bike |
| 3 | Running and individual skills – no contact |
| 4 | Non-contact team training drills |
| 5 | Full-contact training – only after medical clearance |
| 6 | Return to matches |

If symptoms come back at any step, go back to the previous step and seek medical advice. Players with symptoms lasting more than four weeks (under 18) should be referred to a specialist.

### Learn more

The full Concussion Management Guidelines for Gaelic Games and a free online concussion awareness course are at **learning.gaa.ie**.

# Other injuries

For sprains, strains and knocks, follow first aid and the advice of a doctor or physiotherapist. Always tell your coach about any injury, and don't return to training until it has fully healed.

### Preventing injuries

- Always wear a **gumshield** – it is compulsory in Gaelic football, and is also a condition of Injury Fund claims.
- Warm up properly before every session and match, using your coach's injury-prevention warm-up.
- Wear the right boots for the surface.
- Drink water and get enough sleep.

# The Injury Fund

The GAA and LGFA each run an Injury Fund that helps cover medical costs not covered elsewhere. **Players must be registered on Foireann at the date of injury to be covered.** If you have private health insurance, you must claim from your insurer first; the fund can then help with the shortfall.

### Men's and boys' football (GAA)

- Report the injury yourself on **Foireann** (parents report for under-18s).
- Report within **60 days** of the injury – the day of injury is day 1.
- The club then validates the claim before it goes to the fund's administrators.
- Pay medical costs first and keep all receipts; approved costs are refunded.
- Limits and an excess apply – see the GAA Injury Benefit Fund summary on gaa.ie.

### Ladies' and girls' football (LGFA)

- The LGFA has its own injury fund and process.
- Tell your team manager and our LGFA Injury Fund contact, [name, contact], as soon as possible.
- Claims must be made within the LGFA's deadline – [confirm current time limit].
- Keep all receipts and medical reports.

> **Don't wait**
>
> Log every injury straight away, even if you don't think you'll need to claim. Late claims are not accepted.

Club Injury Fund contacts: GAA [name, contact] · LGFA [name, contact]