

ACE POST-CONCUSSION HOME/ SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONS



Following these instructions after a concussion can prevent further injury and help recovery.

WHEN TO SEEK CARE URGENTLY:

Seek care quickly if symptoms worsen or if there are any behavioral changes.
Also, watch for any of the following Danger Signs:

Headaches that worsen	Very drowsy, can't be awakened	Can't recognize people or places
Seizures	Repeated vomiting	Increasing confusion
Neck pain	Slurred speech	Weakness/numbness in arms/legs
Unusual behavior change	Significant irritability	Less responsive than usual

If you observe any of the above Danger Signs, call your doctor or return to the emergency department *immediately*.

COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:

It is common to have one or many concussion symptoms. There are four types of symptoms: physical, cognitive, emotional and sleep. Keep track of them and record them.

Physical		Cognitive	Emotional	Sleep
Headache	Visual Problems	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Drowsiness
Nausea/Vomiting	Fatigue/ Feeling tired	Feeling slowed down	Sadness	Sleeping less than usual
Dizziness	Sensitivity to light or noise	Difficulty remembering	More emotional	Sleeping more than usual
Balance Problems	Numbness/Tingling	Difficulty concentrating	Nervousness	Trouble falling asleep

RETURNING TO DAILY ACTIVITIES:

The key to recovery is sleeping, resting physically and mentally, and avoiding activities that *might* cause another head injury.

- **Avoid:**
 - Physical activities that produce concussion symptoms, as this might increase recovery time.
 - Lengthy mental activities requiring concentration (ie. Homework, schoolwork, job-related work, and extended video game playing) as these activities worsen symptoms and prolong recovery.
- **Sleep:**
 - Get good sleep and take naps if tired. No late nights or sleepovers.
 - It is NOT necessary to wake up periodically.
- The injured person should not participate in **ANY** high risk activities that might result in head injury until examined and cleared by a qualified health care professional. High risk activities include sports, physical education (PE), climbing, or riding a bike.
- It is hard to change from the normal routine. The injured person will need help from parents, teachers, coaches, and athletic trainers to help manage their activity level.

DO'S AND DON'TS:

It's OK to take prescribed pain medicine & sleep. You don't need to wake up every hour.
Don't play sports or exercise!

<u>IT IS OK TO:</u>	<u>THERE IS NO NEED TO:</u>	<u>DO NOT</u>
Take pain medicine as prescribed Use ice pack on head and neck for comfort Go to sleep Rest	Stay in bed Wake up every hour	Drive while you have symptoms Exercise or lift weights Drink alcohol Participate in sports or high-risk activities

RETURNING TO SCHOOL:

If symptoms are severe (cannot concentrate for more than 30-45 minutes without symptoms worsening), staying home and resting may be indicated until symptoms improve.

If symptoms are less severe, rest breaks during school can help recovery.

- Inform the teacher(s), school nurse, school psychologist or counselor, and administrator(s) about your child/teenager's injury and symptoms. Accommodations should be put in place immediately.
- Students who experience symptoms of concussion need periodic rest breaks and extra help to perform school activities. They may not perform at their best on classroom or standardized tests.
- As symptoms decrease, the extra supports (rest breaks during school) can be removed slowly.

SCHOOL PERSONNEL:

School personnel should watch for indications of worsening symptoms, specifically:

- Worsening headaches and increased fatigue
- Increased problems paying attention, concentrating, remembering or learning new information
- Needing longer time to complete a task
- Increased irritability or less of an ability to cope with stress

These are important signs that the brain is doing too much for the current state of recovery. The student should only do school tasks that do not worsen their symptoms.

RETURNING TO SPORTS AND RECREATION:

The injured person should **NEVER** return to sports or active recreation with **ANY** symptoms unless directed by a qualified health care professional.

NO PE class, physical activity at recess, or sports practices or games.

- Tell the Physical Education teacher and all coaches of the injury and symptoms.
- When appropriate, have the student check in with a qualified health care professional on the first day he/she returns.
- It is normal for the child/teenager to feel frustrated, sad, and even angry because they cannot return to sports or recreation right away. With an injury, a full recovery will lower the chances of getting hurt again. ***It is better to miss one game than the whole season.***

STEPWISE RETURN TO ACTIVITY/PLAY:

Once the injured person's symptoms resolve at rest and a qualified health care professional clears the injured person to return to activity, increase physical/ cognitive activity **SLOWLY**.

Pay attention to symptoms.

If symptoms return with increased activity, reduce the level of activity.

****The injured person should be evaluated and cleared by a qualified health care professional with training/ experience in concussion management before returning to contact sports.**

FOLLOW UP:

A follow up appointment should be scheduled with your primary care doctor

- If the injured person is an athlete, has had significant or recurrent head injuries, or the symptoms above persist beyond 5-7 days, evaluation by a concussion specialist is recommended.
- Neuropsychological testing can be helpful to assist with return to academic and physical activity.



Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery & Education (SCORE) Program

Children's National Medical Center www.childrensnational.org/score

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