

Recovery From Concussion And Return To School

After a concussion, it may be necessary to decrease the amount of mental effort, such as reading, writing, studying and taking tests. It may also be necessary to decrease stimulation, such as bright lights, computer or TV screens, loud noises and car travel. All of these may worsen concussion symptoms and prolong the time it takes to recover. On the other hand, complete inactivity and restriction from school may create stress and anxiety about getting further behind, which may lead to worsening of symptoms. It is essential to find some activities your child can do without worsening symptoms and try to gradually increase the amount of participation as tolerated. Participating in activities will also increase blood flow and help improve healing. No one can predict exactly how long it will take to recover or exactly which plan will work best for any given student. It is important to have flexibility in the return-to-school plan based on how well the student can tolerate various activities.

The following school adjustments are recommended for this student:

Testing

- Allow extra time and rest breaks, as needed
- Modify tests to reduce length or difficulty
- Allow memory aids/open-note tests
- No testing until further notice; allow make-up tests when cleared
- Excuse from standardized testing only

School work

- Allow extra time to complete assignments/homework
- Reduce amount of schoolwork/homework by approximately _____
- Modify large projects or reports to reduce workload

Environment

- Avoid noisy, crowded areas, such as gyms, cafeteria, assemblies, pep rallies, band/orchestra
- Transfer between classes a few minutes early to avoid hallway traffic/crowds
- Limit bright lights, screens; allow sunglasses/hat as needed
- Allow rest in quiet areas as needed if having increased symptoms

Physical Activities

- Avoid all playground, gymnasium, PE activities
- Allow low-impact, non-contact exercise, such as walking or jogging on the track; non-contact games, such as tennis or badminton, as tolerated; rest breaks as needed
- Cleared for any and all playground, PE, sports without restrictions

Attendance

- Stay at home for _____ days/weeks, then return to school as tolerated, with the above adjustments
- Shorten length of school day by approximately _____
- Advance to full school day, as tolerated
- Cleared to return to full school participation without restrictions or modifications
- May not return to school until further notice; please initiate homebound instruction

Next visit recommended: _____

Other recommendations: _____

Provider: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Concussion And Return To Sports

During the first few days after a concussion or while still having symptoms, it may be necessary to reduce activity and stimulation, such as movement, travel, bright lights, loud noises and screen time (e.g., computer, TV, phone). On the other hand, total inactivity may cause problems, such as anxiety or stress, deconditioning, headaches and sleep problems. It may be helpful to find light, quiet activities that do not cause worsening of symptoms, such as passively looking at pictures, light reading or audiobooks, arts and crafts or short periods of schoolwork, as tolerated. Furthermore, studies have shown that starting light, low-impact exercise at a level that does not cause worsening of symptoms can be beneficial for recovery. Please remain at a comfortable level until symptom free, then gradually increase exercise intensity to help with cerebral blood flow. The amount of exercise should be gradually increased only if it is not making symptoms worse. Do not progress to very strenuous exercise or contact sports until all symptoms have resolved and the patient has been cleared to do so by an experienced medical provider.

Steps Of Gradual Return To Play:

- STEP 1:** Very light, low-impact exercise, with minimal movement, such as pedaling on a stationary bike or light walking. Exercise duration should begin between 5 to 15 minutes; gradually increasing up to 20 to 30 minutes, as tolerated.
- STEP 2:** Moderate exercise, such as fast pedaling, brisk walking, jogging and light running, light swimming without flip turns or diving, very light weight training, dance, cheerleading or gymnastics without tumbling or stunting.
- STEP 3:** High-intensity, non-contact exertion activities, such as agility training, sport-specific drills, running, swimming, weight training, track and field (except high jump or pole vault), tennis, any other non-contact sports, more advanced dance, cheerleading or gymnastics practice, but without flips or stunts.
- STEP 4:** Full participation in team practice, including contact sports, with monitoring for return of symptoms.
- STEP 5:** Fully released for any and all participation in sports without restriction, including competitive gameplay.

For you, at this time, we recommend starting at Step _____. Find a pace and duration of activity that does not cause worsening of symptoms and gradually advance as tolerated up to Step _____. If symptoms return or worsen, stop and rest for one or two days, then return to the previous level of activity that was tolerated well. We suggest spending approximately _____ days/weeks to advance through each step.

You are cleared/not cleared to progress to full participation in any and all sports/only non-contact sports as tolerated.

Next visit recommended: _____

Other recommendations: _____

Provider: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____