

What can I do to help my child?

Parents play a crucial role in the healing process. Making sure your concussed child gets plenty of rest and avoids certain physical and cognitive stressors. Sleep is critical to the recovery process and should be encouraged with at least 9 hours a night. Understand that the symptoms your child are experiencing are real and significant. Make sure your child gets plenty of food (small meals work best) and liquids. Avoid any spicy foods, as they tend to increase the metabolic rate in some people. If your child's condition worsens, he/she should be taken to the hospital. No child should return to activity/sport without clearance from a PT, ATC, or Physician with appropriate training.

What are some symptoms of a concussion?

- Headache
- Confusion
- Vision disturbances (blurry, glassy eyes, vacant stares)
- Dizziness
- Nausea/vomiting
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sensitivity to light/noise
- Drowsiness
- Sleeping more or less than usual
- Fatigue
- Feeling "foggy, slowed down"
- Unusually emotional/ personality changes (irritable, nervous, or sad)



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Concussion Management





What is a concussion?

“A concussion is an injury to the brain’s cells that causes a disturbance in normal brain function. Concussion can be caused by either getting hit directly on the head from sustaining a hit that causes the head to accelerate forward or backward. You cannot see a concussion, but you can observe the signs and symptoms. No matter the severity, concussion is serious. Even what appears to be a mild jolt or blow to the head or body may cause stretching and tearing of brain cells, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. These chemical changes result in physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms.”

Nutrition

Nutrition plays a big part in healing of the body!

Hydration: Majority of your body consists of water, maintaining hydration is key for health and recovery. Fluid loss as little as 2% has been shown to impair cognitive performance and induce headaches.

Maintain adequate calorie and protein intake: Calories and protein are needed for most tissues to heal. Small meals may help if you suffer from nausea or loss of appetite so eating small meals every 2-3 hours can help you maintain the nutrition you need.

Protein:

- Meat (chicken, beef, or pork)
- Eggs
- Beans and lentils
- Dairy foods (Greek yogurt, cheese, milk)

Fruits and Vegetables

- Greens (broccoli, spinach)
- Oranges: (Carrots, sweet potatoes, oranges)
- Yellows: (Peppers, lemons, squash)
- Reds: (Tomatoes, peppers, watermelon, strawberries)

Small meal ideas:

- Crackers with peanut butter
- Hummus and vegetables
- Greek yogurt with fruit (Smoothies! Greens may be added easily along with nuts, flaxseeds and chia seeds for healthy fats)

What to expect after getting a concussion

Rest (rest is SUPER important in the early stages after a concussion, the brain needs time to heal and disconnect from the outside world.) Having trouble sleeping at night? Naps during the day are encouraged if you cannot reach the full 9 hours during the night.

Don't completely avoid things that make symptoms worse. Normally when something doesn't make us feel very well we should avoid it, right? WRONG. Sitting in a dark room and avoiding social contact can actually make things worse. The brain needs adequate blood flow, walking for 15-20 minutes 2-3 times a day stimulates and provides blood flow to the brain.
Encourage no school if symptoms increase

The healing process takes time. Don't avoid returning to school, but you may want to consider some accommodations if certain classes increase your symptoms:

- Frequent breaks (every 20 minutes)
- Written instructions/ notes
- Extra time for assignments
- Avoid excessive reading

Avoiding screen time (phones, electronics, computers, tv, video games, etc.) is also necessary if they increase symptoms.

Returning to mental and physical activity is very appropriate to allow the brain to accommodate and adapt. Those who specialize in concussion therapy can help athletes return more quickly with full recovery by monitoring your physical, mental, and emotion state.