



Concussion Fact Sheet

Concussions are highly individual: depending on the person involved, a slight blow can cause serious symptoms while a harder blow may cause mild symptoms.

It is very important that the symptoms of a concussion are resolved before a student returns to regular school or sports activities. People under age 21 are susceptible to Second Impact Syndrome, which can result in sudden death or severe disability if there is a second concussion within 2 weeks of the first one.

Elementary, middle and high-school students often exhibit longer recovery times compared to adults. Females tend to have more symptoms and their concussions take longer to resolve.

Concussion symptoms include: nausea, vomiting, headache, fatigue, irritability, dizziness, difficulty with balance and reduced thinking speed.

Key Points:

- Concussion is an epidemic that is often under-identified and under-managed.
- Every concussion must be treated individually.
- It usually takes at least a week to recover from a concussion, and the average full recovery takes three weeks.
- In predicting outcomes:
 - ***Amnesia** is a more significant symptom than loss of consciousness.
 - ***Duration** of symptoms is more important to the outcome than the initial severity of symptoms.

Recommendations for Students with Concussion

- If the injury happened in a sports event/game/practice, the student should not return to the game/practice until they are evaluated - an early return to play puts students at greater risk for developing Post-Concussion Syndrome or Second-Impact Syndrome which can cause permanent brain damage or death.
- Get an immediate evaluation and examination after a suspected concussion.
- Ask your care provider if there are any pain relievers that will be safe for your student. Do not use Ibuprofen/Motrin/Advil to treat the headache from a concussion as it has been associated with a higher incidence Post-Concussion Syndrome.

- Increasing blood flow to the brain may actually slow down recovery! Activity must be restricted while the concussion resolves; in more extreme cases, students may need to be on bed rest.
- The following activities may cause an increase in symptoms and delay recovery from a concussion: texting, listening to music, watching TV, playing computer games, reading, any physical activity including walking or dancing and exposure to noise and bright lights. Wearing sunglasses may offer some relief.
- Allowing your student to continue activities that make symptoms worse can prolong their recovery time! Make sure that your student stops doing any activity that causes symptoms to worsen or return, and modify school attendance and activities if needed. The student will need to restrict TV watching, texting, music listening, reading and homework until their symptoms resolve.
- As symptoms are reduced, you can gradually increase the amount of time spent reading or watching TV or doing other activities.
- Try frequent breaks or attending school for a half day if students have symptoms that worsen throughout the day.
- Students should NOT drive while they are recovering. Response and processing times are often temporarily slowed by a concussion, which can make driving hazardous.
- Talk to your student's teacher or counselor about reducing homework and academic workload during recovery. Postpone testing that requires sustained concentration.
- Students should not return to any exercise, contact or competitive sports until they are symptom-free when at rest and/or have normal neurocognitive testing (e.g. ImPact or similar testing).

Return to play/physical activity/exercise program, recommended at the Prague Concussion Conference: *Important! The student should not attempt to return to physical activity/sports until they are able to be at school all day and complete all academic requirements including homework and testing without having concussion symptoms.*

Day 1: Walking for 20-30 minutes at a rate of 2-1/2 miles per hour.

Day 2: Relaxed jogging for 20-30 minutes.

Day 3: Running for 20-30 minutes.

Day 4: Performing sports-specific practice drills and/or running for 30 minutes.

Day 5: Return to full-activity/contact sports if still symptom-free.

If headaches or other concussion symptoms occur during any step above, the activity needs to be stopped immediately. The student should then wait and rest for 24 hours and then start at the previous level again.

Concussion management recommendations by Dr. Michael Lee. Information condensed from www.impacttest.com/managerecom.php.

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