

ACE POST-CONCUSSION HOME/ SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONS



You have been evaluated for a suspected concussion.

Following these instructions 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	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 head injury.

- **Avoid:**
 - Physical activities that produce concussion symptoms, as this might increase the 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 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!

IT IS OK TO:	THERE IS NO NEED TO:	DO NOT
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.

- **Please take these Instructions and the Return to School Form to your school.**
- 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 often need extra help to perform school-related activities and 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:

- 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

RETURNING TO SPORTS AND RECREATION:

The injured person should NEVER return to sports or active recreation with ANY symptoms unless directed by a health 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 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 healthcare professional clears the injured person to return to activity, increase physical and 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 healthcare professional with training 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 concussions, or the symptoms above persist beyond 10 days, evaluation by a specialist is recommended.
- Neuropsychological testing can be helpful to assist with return to academic and physical activity.

Physician's Signature _____

Date _____



Safe Concussion Outcome, Recovery & Education (SCORE) Program

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

Adapted by Gerard Gioia, PhD; Micky Collins, PhD; Shireen Atabaki, MD, MPH; Noel Zuckerbraun, MD, MPH

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ACE POST-CONCUSSION RETURN TO SCHOOL FORM



Dear School Staff:

Patient _____ was diagnosed with a concussion on _____. Please see the ACE Post-Concussion Home/ School Instructions for further guidance. **Rest is the key to recovery.** While it is important for the student to return to school as soon as possible, it is also important to **manage the amount of physical and cognitive activity** during recovery. Too much activity can make symptoms worse and possibly prolong recovery. If symptoms are resolving and the student's learning/cognitive functioning is returning to normal, they can slowly and carefully return to daily activities. Students will need help from parents, teachers, and coaches to help their recovery and return to activities.

☐ The patient currently has no concussion symptoms. If they continue to be symptom free, they can return to school tomorrow.

☐ The patient currently has concussion symptoms and is excused from school tomorrow. The date of return is to be determined by the pediatrician at the follow up visit.

The patient needs the following physical limitations until cleared by a health professional:

- ☐ No physical activity during recess.
- ☐ No PE class
- ☐ No contact sports.
- ☐ Other _____

Physician's Signature _____

Date _____

RETURNING TO SCHOOL KEY POINTS:

- Students with symptoms and/or neuropsychological dysfunction after a traumatic brain injury often need support to perform school related activities. As symptoms decrease during recovery, these supports may be gradually removed.
- Inform the teacher(s), school nurse, school psychologist or counselor, and administrator(s) about the patient's injury and symptoms.

School personnel should watch for:

- Increase in symptoms (e.g., headache, fatigue) when doing schoolwork
- Increased problems remembering/learning new information
- Greater irritability, less tolerance for stressors
- Increased problems paying attention or concentrating
- Longer time needed to complete tasks or assignments

During recovery, some of the following supports may be needed:

- Shortened Day
- Shortened Classes
- Rest breaks during the day as needed.
- Reduced homework load.
- No significant classroom or standardized testing.
- Extended time to complete coursework/assignments & tests.