

MANAGING YOUR CONCUSSION

What is a concussion?

Concussion is a brain injury that happens when the brain is shaken inside the skull, causing changes in the brain. A concussion might happen as a result of a direct hit to the head or an indirect force, such as whiplash. You may or may not lose consciousness.

How is a concussion diagnosed?

A concussion is diagnosed based on how the injury happened, your symptoms and a physical exam. Other exams looking at your balance and memory may also be used.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

- Headache
- Problems focusing or thinking.
- Feeling tired or sleepy
- Dizziness
- Foggy
- Feeling slowed down
- Light sensitivity
- Balance problems
- Problems with memory

How long will it take to get better?

Most people get better from a concussion in 7 to 10 days. However, some people can take many weeks or months to recover. Anyone with a concussion should get treatment from a healthcare professional.

What should I do if I think I had a concussion?

You should stop playing right away and report your symptoms to a doctor, athletic trainer, or other medical professional. The medical professional will help guide you through treatment for a concussion. They may also check you for a serious brain or neck injury.

In the first 2 days (24-48 hours) following injury:

- Do not take pain medications (i.e., Tylenol, Advil, etc.) unless instructed to by your doctor
- Rest your brain and body
- Sleep for at least 7-10 hours nightly, with the same bedtime and naps as needed
- Avoid use of phones, televisions, computers, and video games
- Eat a healthy diet with regular meals
- Do not drink alcohol or smoke
- Talk to your health care provider about attending school or work
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery
- Do not do activities that make your symptoms worse

Contact your doctor for medication and other options that may help your sleep and brain function.

Should I see a Physical Therapist?

If symptoms are severe or not getting better you should be referred for physical therapy. Physical Therapy can help to decrease symptoms which will allow you to return to your regular activities. Therapy will focus on helping with your balance, vision, dizziness, neck pain, headaches and returning to school and other activities.

When can I return to my sport?

Your doctor will decide when you can return to playing sports based on your symptoms and your ability to return to school or work without difficulty. A slow, gradual return to sports guided by an athletic trainer may be recommended.

Seek additional medical help right away by contacting your doctor or emergency department if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Repeated vomiting
- Worsening headache
- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Unusual behavior (confused and/or short-tempered)
- Slurred speech
- Drowsy or difficulty waking up
- Seizures
- The pupils of your eyes appear to be different sizes