

CONCUSSION Home Care Guidelines

I believe that _____ sustained a concussion on _____.

To help ensure the above named student recovers appropriately, please read this instruction sheet completely and review the symptoms below. **If the following symptoms develop, call 9-1-1 or transport to the emergency room immediately.**

Symptoms

- Decreasing level of consciousness
- Increasing confusion
- Increasing irritability
- Numbness in arms or legs
- Pupils becoming unequal in size
- Repeated vomiting
- Seizures
- Slurred speech or inability to speak
- Inability to recognize people or places
- Worsening headache
- Neck pain

Otherwise, you can follow the instructions outlined below:

1. **Set up an appointment with your family physician.** The athlete may NOT return to physical activity until medical clearance is granted by a physician.
 - Please refer to Post-Concussion Return to Activity Protocol for full return to participation plan.
2. Remain under the observation of a responsible adult for the first 24-hours. Being awoken while sleeping is NOT necessary, unless otherwise instructed.
3. Maintain a well-regulated schedule with normal wake/sleep times; avoid taking extra naps.
4. Eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of water and other liquids.
5. Avoid all moderate-to-high level physical activity. However, complete bed rest is not necessary. Low levels of physical exertion (such as light walking) are encouraged and regular daily activities should be resumed, as tolerated.
6. Attendance at school is encouraged, based on severity of symptoms. Discuss with your healthcare provider.
7. **DO NOT:**
 - Engage in anything that increases symptoms.
 - Limit time spent watching TV, texting, and on the computer/phone/iPad.
 - Avoid bright or flashing lights and loud noises.
 - Take any medications without permission from a licensed health care professional.
 - Operate a car, machinery, or other motorized vehicle.
 - Drink any alcohol.

Additional Instructions:



Recommendations provided by Black River Memorial Hospital Sports Medicine Staff:

- Dawn Jacobson, MA, LAT
 William Larkin, DPT

- Carmen Liebelt, DPT

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please call the Rehab Department at (715) 284-1330 with any questions.



Things to Know About CONCUSSIONS

What is it? A concussion is a brain injury that results in your brain not working as it should. Any blow to the head, face, neck, or body that causes a sudden shaking or jarring of the brain inside the skull may cause a concussion. You do not have to get hit in the head to have a concussion. For example, receiving a check in hockey or a hard hit in football that jars the head and neck can cause a concussion. Also, you do not need to lose consciousness to have a concussion. Only a small percentage of concussions result in loss of consciousness.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Physical

- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Fatigue or low energy
- Balance problems
- Sensitivity to light or noise

Cognitive (Thinking)

- General confusion or fogginess
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering

Emotional

- Irritability or Sadness
- Feeling nervous or worried
- More emotional than usual

How long will symptoms last? The length of symptoms varies greatly between individuals. For some, symptoms may last less than 24 hours, while for others symptoms may last several weeks to months. It is important to know that even after the physical symptoms are gone, the brain is still healing. It usually takes at least 1-2 weeks once symptom-free before you are safe to return to full participation. That is why it is important to follow an appropriate Return to Play Protocol through a licensed healthcare professional.



“It’s an important game. Why can’t I just play through it?”

The short-term and long-term effects of continuing to participate can be devastating. Even just finishing the current event you are participating in puts you at risk. Do not wait until after a game or until the next day to tell someone you may have a concussion. You need to remove yourself from participation immediately and get checked out!

The most serious risk of returning to play too soon is Second Impact Syndrome. **Second Impact Syndrome** is a severe condition that occurs when an athlete sustains a second blow to the head prior to the brain being fully recovered from the first concussion. Second Impact Syndrome is rare, but when it occurs, it is almost always fatal, resulting in death.

The long-term consequence of continuing to play through a concussion or returning too soon is **Post-Concussive Syndrome**. This results in long-term (often life-long) problems, such as:

- Chronic headaches or migraines
- Anxiety and irritability
- Dizziness
- Insomnia (inability to sleep)
- Memory Problems
- Intense anger and/or aggression
- Personality changes
- Inattention and lack of concentration
- Sensitivity to noise and light

Is it safe for me to continue to exercise, as long as I make sure I do not hit my head?

No. All sports participation and moderate-high level physical activity should be discontinued while recovering from a concussion. The body needs to focus its energy on brain healing. Since exercise uses a lot of energy, it can slow down the recovery process. The most important treatment is physical and mental rest.