

Concussion: Guide for Parents

A concussion can result in temporary changes in a person's normal functioning. Common symptoms include double vision or visual changes, confusion, being dazed, dizziness, headache, vomiting, and memory loss for what happened before or after the injury. Most young people will recover completely from a single concussion within two weeks, however, some may take longer. Common problems seen after a concussion are listed below:

If your child shows any of the following symptoms, seek medical assistance immediately:

- Slurred speech or trouble talking
- Severe headache or long-lasting headache
- Confusion, sleepiness, or trouble waking up
- Vomiting
- Falling, poor balance or difficulties walking
- A seizure
- Any other sudden change in thinking or behavior

Physical	Thinking (Cognitive)	Behavioral or Emotional
Headaches	Acts as if "in a fog"	Irritability or grouchiness
Low energy/run down	Gets confused easily	Sadness
Vomiting or sick stomach	Slowed thinking	Anxious or nervous
Trouble with vision	Trouble paying attention	Personality change
Poor sleep	Decline in school performance	Easily upset or frustrates quickly
Sensitivity to light or noise	Difficulty remembering new information	Crying

How to aid in recovery:

- **Safety:** Avoid sports or other activities that might cause another blow to the head
- **Relative Rest:** light physical activity is okay. Avoid activities that increase symptoms. Minimize cognitive demands. Ensure adequate sleep and good nutrition.
- **Extra Time:** Typical activities may take longer than normal. Allow as much time as they need and avoid pressure to complete tasks quickly.
- **If they forget, give them the information:** If there is trouble recalling information, just fill in the blanks. It doesn't speed recovery by trying to force them to recall the information.
- **Allow breaks:** There may be more trouble paying attention. Encourage frequent breaks and shorter work periods.
- **Patience:** There may be an increase in irritability, shorter temper or easier frustration than what is usual. Don't take it personally and encourage a break to cool off.

Return-to-school guidelines:

- Typically, most athletes can go back to school within a few days of their injury. It is best to start out slowly, and build up over time. For example, going for a couple of hours, half days, and then attempting a full-time schedule.
- Inform the school that your child has a concussion. Make sure the teacher, school nurse and administrators know that the student is recovering from a concussion.
- Special arrangements may need to be made in the short term, including:
 - ✓ Rest times or breaks during school
 - ✓ Putting off tests until the student has recovered
 - ✓ Extra time on tests
 - ✓ Deferring assignments or important projects
 - ✓ Being given extra time or being excused from assignments
 - ✓ Being excused from PE