

Concussion Do's and Don'ts

Please follow the recommendations below for management of post concussive symptoms! Please call your physical therapist, physician, or athletic trainer immediately with questions or concerns.

Do:

- Remove yourself from sports participation immediately after the onset of symptoms
- Go to the ER if the athlete is vomiting, has a severe/worsening headache, looks very drowsy/can't be awakened, has numbness in arms/legs, or is unable to answer simple questions
- Follow recommendations for relative physical AND cognitive rest (resume normal activities of daily living ASAP but avoid strenuous cognitive and physical activity)
- Sleep as much as needed (frequent naps are best)
- If loss of consciousness or prolonged amnesia is present, wake the athlete up every 3-4 hours
- Drink plenty of water (extra if you can!)
- Eat a proper diet (fruits, veggies, protein)
- Stay home from school until you can tolerate light reading at home and are symptom-free at rest
- Lessen your work load by informing teachers, increasing time for tests, or starting with half-days
- Minimize stress
- Speak with a psychiatrist if you are having difficulty with stress and symptom management
- Tylenol is acceptable to manage headaches
- Take Melatonin if you have difficulty sleeping
- Take short walks if symptom-free
- Follow stepwise return to activity when asymptomatic at rest
- Complete your physical therapist recommended home exercise program

• Don't:

- Return to sports the same day your injury occurs (increased likelihood for further injury within first 10 days after initial concussion)
- Take Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, and other NSAIDS that can increase the risk of bleeding
- Intentionally be disturbed when sleeping (unless symptoms from first column are present)
- Spend too much time in front of "screens" (video games, phone, tv, computer)
- Expose yourself to bright lights or loud noises
- Participate in activities requiring intense concentration (reading or school work)
- Participate in activities that increase symptoms
- Drive, ride a bike, go on amusement park rides, or participate in gym class until instructed to do so
- Just be a couch potato- move a little if tolerated
- Eat salty and sugary foods (chips, soda)
- Skip your physician follow-up appointments (even if you are feeling better)
- Stay home from school or work "just because"
- Stay in school if your symptoms are severe
- Avoid social interactions with your friends unless they provoke symptoms
- Ignore your home exercise program as this will definitely delay your recovery
- Return to sports when symptoms are still present
- Return to sports unless cleared by your healthcare provider