



Steps for Parents to Monitor a Concussion

A CONCUSSION IS A BRAIN INJURY

Keep this document. It contains important information about your child's concussion that your pediatrician or family physician will want to know. It is a tool for you to use to track the initial steps toward recovery.

What is a concussion? A concussion is a brain injury that disrupts the way your brain functions. Most concussions will resolve completely when managed properly. The best treatment for concussion is physical, cognitive/mental and social rest.

Name: _____

Date of Concussion: _____

Date of Concussion Diagnosis _____

Date/Years of previous concussions: _____

Date of follow-up visit with your pediatrician or family physician: _____

CT Scan? YES NO If YES, Date: _____

MRI? YES NO If YES, Date: _____

About Imaging: A concussion will not show on a CT or MRI because they do not show damage or changes on a cellular level. CT and MRI scans will show structural damage like a fractured skull or a bleed in the brain. Emergency department physicians are cautious about exposing children to radiation and will typically request a CT scan only in cases of deteriorating neurological functioning.

Whenever a concussion is suspected:

1. Follow up with your pediatrician or family physician.
2. Physical, Cognitive and Social Rest.

Physical activities can stimulate the heart rate and increase blood flow to the brain which can exacerbate concussion symptoms or cause them to re-occur. Some examples of physical activity are: doing household chores, traveling, driving, trips outside of home, playing a musical instrument, aerobic exercise, lifting weights, playing sports.

Cognitive or thinking activities use energy in the brain and can slow recovery from concussion, exacerbate symptoms or cause them to re-occur. Some examples of cognitive activities are: video games, computer use, phone use, texting, reading, doing puzzles, attending school, taking tests, taking notes, doing homework, watching TV, watching movies, drawing/artwork, etc.

Any **social interaction** like going to the mall, attending sporting events, hanging out with friends or having visitors at home may exacerbate symptoms.

STOP any activity that worsens the symptoms.

Call the doctor or go to the emergency room if symptoms worsen as this may be a sign of deteriorating neurological functioning.

Some examples are: speech becomes slurred; child becomes confused/disoriented; child begins vomiting

**Track your symptoms on the chart below until the follow up visit with the pediatrician or family physician.
Use a scale of 0 through 6 with 0=no symptoms and 6=severe symptoms**

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14
Headache														
Pressure in head														
Neck pain														
Nausea or vomiting														
Dizziness														
Blurred vision														
Balance problems														
Sensitive to light														
Sensitive to noise/sound														
Feeling slowed down														
Feeling like "in a fog"														
Don't feel right														
Difficulty concentrating														
Difficulty remembering														
Fatigue or low energy														
Confusion														
Drowsiness														
Trouble falling asleep														
More emotional														
Irritability														
Sadness														
Nervous or anxious														

Symptoms of a concussion can last for hours, days, weeks or months, and can cause problems in school, work and social activities. It is important to follow up with your primary care physician or pediatrician, it may be necessary to follow up with a healthcare provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion if symptoms persist.

For more information, visit www.sportsconcussion.com or contact
The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey
www.bianj.org • 732-745-0200 • 1-800-669-4323 • info@bianj.org



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