



## CONCUSSION DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

The injured person was diagnosed with a concussion—a change in brain function brought about by a traumatic force. Follow these instructions to prevent further injury and help recovery.

### COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:

It is common for a concussed child/teenager to have one or many concussion symptoms.

Physical	Cognitive/Mental	Emotional	Sleep
Headache Nausea/Vomiting Dizziness Balance Problems Visual problems Fatigue/Feeling tired Sensitivity to light or noise Numbness	Feeling mentally foggy Feeling slowed down Difficulty remembering Difficulty concentrating	Irritability Sadness More emotional Nervousness	Drowsiness Sleeping less than usual Sleeping more than usual Trouble falling asleep

### WHEN TO SEEK CARE URGENTLY:

- Headaches that worsen
- Seizures
- Neck pain
- Unusual behavior change
- Very drowsy, can't be awakened
- Repeated vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Significant irritability
- Can not recognize people or places
- Increasing confusion
- Weakness/numbness in arms/legs
- Less responsive than usual

**If you observe any of the above signs, call your doctor or return to the Emergency Department immediately.**

### DO'S AND DON'T'S:

It is OK to:	There is NO need to:	DO NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take Tylenol or Motrin as needed</li> <li>• Use an ice pack on head/neck for comfort</li> <li>• Go to sleep</li> <li>• Rest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay in bed</li> <li>• Wake up every hour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive while you have symptoms</li> <li>• Exercise or lift heavy weights</li> <li>• Drink alcohol</li> <li>• Participate in sports or high-risk activities</li> </ul>

### RETURNING TO DAILY ACTIVITIES:

It is hard to change from the normal routine. The injured person will need help from parents, teachers, coaches, and athletic trainers to help manage their activity level.

#### Avoid:

- Physical activities and lengthy mental activities that require concentration (i.e., Homework, job-related work and extended video game playing) as these activities worsen symptoms and prolong recovery.
- The injured person should NOT participate in ANY high-risk activities that may result in head injury until examined and cleared by a physician. High-risk activities include sports, PE and riding an ATV or bike.

**Sleep:** Get good sleep and take naps if tired. No late nights or sleepovers. It is NOT necessary to wake up periodically.

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### RETURNING TO SCHOOL:

- Inform the teacher (s), school nurse, school counselor and administrator (s) about your child/teenager's injury and symptoms.
- School personnel should watch for signs of worsening symptoms, specifically: \*increased problems paying attention, concentrating, remembering or learning new information \*needing longer time to complete a task \* increased irritability or \*less of an ability to cope with stress.
- If symptoms are severe (and/or patient has difficulty concentrating), staying at home may be necessary until symptoms improve.
- If symptoms are less severe, the school administrators can assist with individuals returning to school by: \*giving rest breaks (at least one per day, more if needed) \*reducing workload \* allowing flexibility with assignment due dates \* avoiding loud or noisy environments and \*not giving standardized tests until symptom free.
- As symptoms decrease, the extra supports can be removed slowly.

### RETURNING TO SPORTS AND RECREATION:

Alabama Concussion Law mandates that the injured person may not return to any physical activities or sports until they are cleared by a physician. NO PE class, sports practices or games.

- Tell the Physical Education teacher and all coaches of the injury and symptoms.
- When appropriate, have the student check in with the athletic trainer or school nurse on the first day he/she returns.
- It is normal for the child/teenager to feel frustrated, sad and even angry because they cannot return to sports or recreation right away. With an injury, a full recovery will lower the chances of getting hurt again. **It is better to miss one game than the whole season.**

### STEPWISE RETURN TO ACTIVITY/PLAY:

Once the injured person's symptoms resolve at rest and a physician clears the injured person to return to activity, the injured person may SLOWLY increase activity as outlined below. If symptoms return with a new step, the injured person should follow up with a concussion specialist.

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|--|------------------------|
| 1) No activity and rest until symptom free.              | 4) Non-contact drills  |
| 2) Light aerobic exercise (i.e. light jogging, swimming) | 5) Full-contact drills |
| 3) Sport-specific training (i.e. weight training)        | 6) Game play           |

### FOLLOW UP:

Please call your primary care doctor to schedule a follow-up appointment.

If the injured person is an athlete, has had significant or more than one head injury or the symptoms above last beyond 5-7 days, we recommend calling for a specialty evaluation:

*Follow these instructions carefully. If the injured person has problems that we did not list or you have any other concerns, call your primary care doctor immediately.*