



Children's Hospital Colorado Concussion Program

Return to Play Protocol after Concussion

Concussions are types of brain injuries. They should be taken seriously and be followed by a physician. In the initial period of recovery following a concussion, it can be helpful to “take it easy” for awhile and allow the brain time to rest and heal. Athletes should be free of all concussion-related symptoms or problems (e.g., headache) before returning to sports. Once the athlete is entirely free of symptoms and a doctor says it is medically safe, returning to play should occur in a gradual, step-wise fashion, as follows:

- 1. Light aerobic exercise such as walking or stationary cycling; no resistance training.**
- 2. Sport specific exercise such as skating in hockey or running in soccer; progressive addition of resistance training.**
- 3. Non-contact training drills; progressive addition of resistance training.**
- 4. Full contact training after MEDICAL CLEARANCE.**
- 5. Competitive game play.**

With this stepwise progression, the athlete should continue to proceed to the next step if free of symptoms at the current step. If any symptoms reoccur, the athlete should drop back to the previous step and try to progress again after 24 hours. Remember, medical clearance by your physician is required before returning to play sports initially and before full contact training in step 4.

Academic Relief after Concussion

Most young people will recover completely from a concussion within a couple of weeks. Typically, athletes can return to school after resting for a few days or less. If problems continue once the athlete returns to school, they should not be required to take exams during the initial 1-2 week recovery period. If needed, classroom and homework assignments should be decreased to ensure the student can adequately manage the workload without becoming overly stressed. If symptoms last longer than 1-2 weeks after the concussion, a follow up visit with the primary physician should be scheduled. If problems persist, specialty concussion follow-up through Children's Hospital Colorado could be helpful to develop a plan to support recovery and manage any school-related difficulties.

If your school / teachers have any questions or concerns, contact our office: 720-777-2806 OR 720-777-3899

More information about concussion is also available through our website: www.childrenscolorado.org/concussion