





## Education for Physical Therapy with Concussion *For patients 12 and younger*

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that is caused from a bump, blow or jolt to the head which causes the brain to move abruptly within the skull. Concussions are usually non-life threatening but their effects can be serious.

### Signs and Symptoms:

These symptoms can occur and be a normal part of the body's healing process.

 <u>Physical</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Nausea/Vomiting</li> <li>• Dizziness or balance problems</li> <li>• Vision trouble</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li> <li>• Numbness or tingling</li> </ul>	 <u>Thinking/Remembering</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty thinking clearly</li> <li>• Difficulty with concentration or attention</li> <li>• Foggy or groggy</li> <li>• Difficulty with short-term or long-term memory</li> </ul>	 <u>Social or Emotional</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritable</li> <li>• Anxiety or nervousness</li> <li>• Feeling more emotional</li> <li>• Sadness</li> </ul>	 <u>Sleep</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drowsy</li> <li>• Sleeping less than usual</li> <li>• Sleeping more than usual</li> <li>• Trouble falling asleep</li> </ul>
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### What is the expected recovery?

80% of individuals who sustain a concussion expect to recover and will be symptom free within 10-14 days. A pre-puberty child's brain heals at a slower rate and typically recover within 4 weeks.

### How can I help my child before their first therapy visit?

- Monitor Symptoms:
  - Minors should be monitored by a responsible adult for several hours - if their condition does not significantly worsen, then it's ok to let them sleep through the night.
- Sleep Hygiene:
  - Try to maintain a regular sleep schedule for your child. Keep a consistent bedtime and waking time, even on the weekends.
  - Save sleep for at night. Avoid atypical napping throughout the day, if possible.
- Activity:
  - Encourage quiet play/light physical activity (ex: Legos, dolls, walking, etc.) to allow your child's brain to heal and recover. You can always ask your therapist at the first appointment if a specific activity is appropriate.
  - Avoid highly physical play (playground play, biking, sledding, skiing, etc.) until clearance is given, as your child is more susceptible to additional injuries.

- Avoid screens:
  - Examples: television, iPad, tablet, phone, etc.
  - Bright lights can make symptoms worse.
- Hydration:
  - Encourage your child to drink a lot of water, juice, or milk. Limit the number of carbonated beverages they drink.

### **What to expect when you come for therapy?**

- Initial Evaluation – Below are a few things that will be covered and or done at the initial evaluation:
  - General medical history review
  - Physical exam including:
    - Balance assessment
    - Gait analysis
    - Muscle strength testing
    - Vision/oculomotor assessment
    - General range of motion assessment
    - Sensation assessment
  - Education on:
    - Potential activity restrictions from school or play/sport. \*Your therapist will be able to provide you with an excuse note if activity restrictions are recommended.
    - Safe return to academics and play/sport following a concussion.
- Ongoing Treatments:
  - Establishing a home program and adjusting as needed.
  - Progression through ‘Return to School’ and ‘Return to Play’ protocols when able.
- When will your child be done with physical therapy?
  - When your child’s symptoms are no longer present or have decreased with cognitive activity or physical/sports’ specific drills.

### **What can I do for my child?**

- Right after the physical therapy visit:
  - Rest. Limit your child’s physical and mental activity. Help them get a full night of restful sleep. Your child does not need to sit in a quiet dark room. Feel free to help them find enjoyable or relaxing activities, but pay attention if these activities increase your child’s symptoms.
- After a few days:
  - Gradually return to daily life. General guideline: if symptoms worsen during or after an activity, then cut down time or avoid having your child do that activity altogether for the time being. Have them participate in school as much as they will tolerate. PT will work with you and your child on specifics, but try to return them to a normal schedule as much as their symptoms will allow.
- Once symptoms are gone:
  - Return to school protocol: PT will work with you and your child on gradually returning to attending school full time. Your child must be able to return and attend to school fully before return to play can start.
  - Return to play protocol: PT will work with you and your child on a step by step process where we gradually increase your activity. Your child MUST complete this protocol before returning to full activities or sports.

**All items stated above are subject to change and/or be modified based on each patient’s individual presentation and symptoms. If you have any questions prior to your first visit, please contact Heather Ardner, PT or Lindsey Mork, PT at 507-388-5437.**