



Child Concussion Information for Teachers: Return to Learn

This information sheet contains important information about returning to school and learning after a concussion according to current best practice guidelines.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury. Any child/teen who gets hit in the head, face, neck, or body has a chance of getting a concussion. Concussions cannot be seen on brain scans or x-rays.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

A child does not have to be “knocked out” (black out or unconscious) to have a concussion. Some symptoms may not appear until the next day.

Common symptoms children/teens may describe include:

- Headaches or pressure in the head
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Blurred or fuzzy vision (“seeing stars”)
- Feeling tired

Common symptoms you may see from children/teens include:

- Lying still on the ice or ground
- Being slow to get up
- Difficulty standing or walking
- Confusion or can’t answer questions
- Mood/behaviour changes

Other Important Information:

- 24h is the minimum time recommended to change steps. Going through all the steps can take 1-4 weeks. Every child will recover differently. Medical follow-ups may be required if your child takes longer than 4 weeks to recover.
- It is important to not skip steps or move to next steps too quickly to prevent worsening of symptoms and prolonged recovery.

Steps for return-to-school and sport can happen at the same time.

It’s important that the student returns to school full time before returning to full-contact sport or high risk activities. Children who return to sports too early after a concussion are at an increased risk of another injury. Having another injury can lead to worse symptoms that last longer.

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When can a child/teen return to school after a concussion?

A child/teen should rest for 1-2 days after a concussion. Return to school and learning should be gradual (step-by-step). Begin with 30 minutes of cognitive activity at a time and increase by 30 minutes with each step. Return to school is expected prior to return to sport.

Step 1: Rest at home (24-48 hours max).

No schoolwork. Limit screen time. Basic board games, crafts, talking on the phone permitted.

Step 2: Light activities at home.

Reading, texting, drawing, and other activities that do not make symptoms worse. Start with 5-15 minutes at a time and gradually increase.

Step 3: Light school activities at home.

Introduce school work such as reading, homework, or other activities outside of the classroom. Work up to 60 minutes of school work in two 30 minute intervals.

Step 4: Return to school part-time.

Going back to school for a few hours or half days. Gradually increase school activities with academic accommodations as needed.

Step 5: Return to school full time.

Gradual return to full days at school. All homework.

Helpful Resources:

CATT Return to School. <https://cattonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CATT-Return-to-School-V12-March-2019.pdf>

CATT Concussion Resources for School Professionals. <https://cattonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Concussion-Resources-for-School-Professionals-CATT-V2-Sep-2019.pdf>

CDC Returning to School After a Concussion. https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/schools/tbi_returning_to_school-a.pdf

Living Guideline for Diagnosing and Managing Pediatric Concussion. <https://pedsconcussion.com/>

References :

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TREKK. (2022). Bottom Line Recommendations Concussion, version 3.1. Winnipeg, MB: TREKK. https://trekk.ca/system/assets/assets/attachments/570/original/2022-02-11_Concussion_BLR-converted.pdf?1644953349