

Mild Head Injury / Concussion

Discharge advice to patients, their family and friends:

- You have had a head injury (sometimes called concussion)
- There was no serious injury noted today and we think it is safe for you to go home
- Although serious problems are rare, where possible someone should stay with you for 24-hours
- It is safe to sleep

Seek urgent medical attention if you have the following symptoms:

- **A headache that gets worse**
- **Persistent nausea / vomiting**
- **Confusion or unusual behaviour**
- **Drowsiness or unable to be woken up**
- **Blackout / faint / seizure**
- **Weakness in arms/legs**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Blurred vision**

Symptoms of concussion particularly in the first 2weeks after injury include:

Headaches

Headaches are common. They are also related to tiredness and stress particularly if the brain is not being rested adequately. It is important to take regular pain relief.

If headaches get worse see your GP.

Fatigue

You will often want to go to bed early, sleep for longer, and take naps through the day. Rest often, your brain needs it.

Poor concentration and memory problems

When you get tired your concentration fails and your memory can get worse. If there is something you need to get done, start when you feel fresh and stop when you feel tired.

Noise

Avoid loud noises. Noise can stimulate the brain and may cause irritation and headaches.

Irritability / mood changes

You may become easily annoyed, irritable or emotional. If you notice this happening, try to remove yourself from the situation and take 'time out'.

Visual disturbances

Eye sight may be blurred 'foggy'. You may also be sensitive to light and will need to wear sunglasses to reduce the light stimulus.

Dizziness and nausea

An imbalance in your ears can cause dizziness and sometimes vertigo (room spinning around) when you make a sudden head movement.

What to do now...

Rest / sleep - avoid strenuous exercise whilst having symptoms.
Avoid watching TV or using computer/cell-phone for long periods of time.
Avoid loud noises. Get plenty of sleep; your brain needs time to recover.

Work/study - Take time off work at least for 48-hours and longer if you have ongoing symptoms. See your GP if you need a review for further time off.

Drinking - Do not drink alcohol or take sleeping pills for at least 48 hours or until your symptoms resolve.

Driving - Do not drive for at least 24 hours. You can drive again when you stop feeling giddy and you feel well enough. See your GP if you are unsure.

Returning to sport - You must stand down from contact sport for at least 3 weeks AND not return to sport until you are symptom free AND have medical clearance.

Guide for returning to sport

Stage 1	Rest both physically and mentally
Stage 2	Do light exercise* - walking, stationary bike, socialising, light housework
Stage 3	Start aerobic exercise* - running (no sports or impact training)
Stage 4	Raise intensity of exercise* - sports/resistance training (no contact sport)
Stage 5	Normal training activities* (ensure you have medical clearance)
Stage 6	Return to full sporting activities*

Adapted from McCrory P, Meeuwisse W, Dvorak J, et al. Consensus statement on concussion in sport - the 5th international conference on concussion in sport held in Berlin, October 2016.

*** You should have at least 24-48 hours of rest prior to commencing the return to sport guide.**

Each stage will need at least 24-48 hours (often longer) to progress through.

- **If any symptom gets worse or you get new symptoms, go back to the previous stage.**
- **If symptoms persist for more than 10–14 days you should seek medical attention.**

Follow-up with you GP (family doctor)

- In 7-10 days for review, particularly if you are still experiencing symptoms
- If you are unable to return to work after a short period of rest
- Before returning to high intensity or contact sport, including weight-lifting