

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

CONCUSSION FACTS

The **biggest** risk is going back to play before the brain heals and getting another concussion!

RETURN TO SCHOOL GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**A concussion is a
brain injury and
must be taken
seriously!**



Higher risk of
prolonged recovery with:

- Multiple concussions
- History of learning or behaviour problems
- History of migraines
- Symptoms of amnesia, fogginess, or dizziness

Percentage of children who are
symptom free in:

15 days = 25%
26 days = 50%
45 days = 75%
92 days = 90%

**WHEN IN DOUBT
SIT THEM OUT**



**WHEN THEY'RE OKAY
RETURN TO PLAY**



For more information, please visit
www.canchild.ca



RETURN TO SCHOOL GUIDELINES

STEPS 1-4 of the "Return to Activity" and "Return to School" guidelines should progress together, however youth should return to full-time school activities before returning to STEP 5 and STEP 6 of the RTA Guidelines.

STAGE 1: COGNITIVE AND PHYSICAL REST

- **NO SCHOOL** for at least **24 hours**, complete daily home routines as tolerated
- Cognitive rest (**LIMIT/AVOID** TV, video games, texting, reading)
- When symptoms have decreased/disappeared, move to **STAGE 2**

If symptoms persist past 2 weeks, move to **STAGE 2*

STAGE 2: GETTING READY TO GO BACK

- Begin gentle activity guided by symptoms (walking, 15 minutes of screen time twice daily, begin reading)
- When symptoms have decreased/disappeared, move to **STAGE 3**

Get clearance from a physician or brain injury clinician before beginning **STAGE 3*

STAGE 3: BACK TO SCHOOL/MODIFIED ACADEMICS

- This stage may last for days or months depending on rate of recovery
- Go to bed early and get lots of sleep. Have a quiet retreat space in school
- Academic Modifications:
 - Timetable/attendance: Start by going for one hour, half days or every other day
 - Curriculum: Attend less stressful classes, no tests, homework in 15 minute blocks up to a maximum of 45 minutes daily
 - Environment: Preferential seating, avoid music class, gym class, cafeteria, taking the bus, carrying heavy books
 - Activities: Limit screen/TV time into 15 minute blocks for up to 1 hour daily
- When symptoms are tolerated, move to **STAGE 4**

If symptoms persist past 4 weeks -> A recovery **Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may be needed*

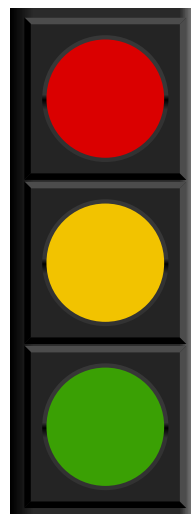
STAGE 4: NEARLY NORMAL ROUTINES

- Back to full days of school but can do less than 5 days a week if needed
- Complete as much homework as tolerated and a maximum of 1 test per week
- When symptom free, move to **STAGE 5**

STAGE 5: FULLY BACK TO SCHOOL

- Gradual return to normal routines including attendance, homework, tests, and extracurricular activities

These stages are designed to strike a balance between the importance of returning to school and brain recovery. Work with your school to put these recommendations into place.



STAGE 1: COGNITIVE AND PHYSICAL REST

STAGE 2: GETTING READY TO GO BACK

STAGE 3: BACK TO SCHOOL/MODIFIED ACADEMICS

STAGE 4: NEARLY NORMAL ROUTINES

STAGE 5: FULLY BACK TO SCHOOL



If symptoms increase or return at any STAGE, reduce activity by returning to the previous STAGE until symptom free for 24 hours.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- **Anxiety** can be high after a brain injury. Many children worry about school failure and need reassurance about the temporary accommodations.
- **Depression** is common during recovery from a brain injury, especially when the child is unable to be active. This may make symptoms worse or prolong recovery.

Talk with the child about these issues and offer encouragement and support.

ALSO SEE MCMASTER RETURN TO ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

CONCUSSION

A concussion, also known as a mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI), changes the way the brain functions. An mTBI can be caused by a direct or indirect hit, blow, or force to the head or body.

SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

- Sleep disturbances or drowsiness
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Poor balance or coordination
- Dizziness
- Visual problems
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Mentally foggy
- Difficulty concentrating/remembering
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Nervousness

Symptoms should be evaluated daily to show healing and recovery

RED FLAG SYMPTOMS

If any of the following symptoms develop, go to the emergency department/ seek further investigation immediately:

- Increased drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- Headaches worsen or neck pain
- Persistent vomiting
- Pupils are unequal in size
- Seizures
- Confusion or short-term memory loss
- Blurred/double vision, slurred speech, or loss of motor function
- Change in behaviour (irritability, agitation, or aggression)