

Concussion Discharge Instructions Return to School Form

Dear School Staff:

Patient _____ was diagnosed with a concussion on _____ and a plan was designed to assist his/her recovery. **Rest is the key.** While it is important for the student to return to school as soon as possible, it is also important to **manage the amount of physical and cognitive activity** during recovery. Too much activity can make symptoms worse and possibly prolong recovery. If symptoms are resolving and the student's learning/cognitive functioning is returning to normal, they can slowly and carefully return to daily activities. Students will need help from parents, teachers, and coaches to help their recovery and return to activities.

The patient should be able to return to school:

- Tomorrow
- In two days. Date: _____
- In three days. Date: _____
- Other _____

The patient needs the following physical limitations until cleared by a health professional:

- No PE class.
- No contact sports.
- No physical activity during recess.
- Other _____

Staff Signature _____
Date: _____

Returning to School Key Points:

- Students with symptoms and/or neuropsychological dysfunction after a traumatic brain injury often need support to perform school related activities. As symptoms decrease during recovery, these supports may be gradually removed.
- Inform the teacher(s), school nurse, school psychologist or counselor, and administrator(s) about the patient's injury and symptoms. **School personnel should watch for:**
 - * Increased problems paying attention or concentrating
 - * Longer time needed to complete tasks or assignments
 - * Greater irritability, less tolerance for stressors
 - * Increased problems remembering/learning new information
 - * Increase in symptoms (e.g. headache, fatigue) when doing schoolwork

Please Be Aware that Patients may experience these concussion symptoms:

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Sleep
Headache	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Drowsiness
Nausea/Vomiting	Feeling slowed down	Sadness	Sleeping less than usual
Dizziness	Difficulty remembering	More emotional	Sleeping more than usual
Balance Problems	Difficulty concentrating	Nervousness	Trouble falling asleep

Until full recovery the following supports are recommended:

- * Shortened Day
- * Shortened Classes
- * Extended time to complete coursework/ assignments and tests
- * Reduced homework load.
- * No significant classroom or standardized testing.
- * Rest breaks during the day as needed.

Follow Up:

Please call your primary care doctor to schedule a follow up in the next 3 days.

- If the injured person is an athlete, has had significant or recurrent head injuries, or the symptoms above persist beyond 5-7 days, we recommend calling the concussion follow-up program for a specialty evaluation: The SCORE Concussion Clinic 202-476-2429. or Sports Medicine Center 301-754-0505
- Neuropsychological testing can be very helpful to assist your child with return to academic and physical activity.
- Please call your primary care physician for a referral before you make any special appointments.

Follow these instructions carefully. If the injured person has problems that we did not list or you have any other concerns, call your doctor immediately. If you can't reach your doctor, call the Emergency Department with any questions at 202-476-5203.

Physician's Signature _____

Concussion Discharge Instructions

The injured person was diagnosed with a concussion (also known as a *mild* traumatic brain injury). Following these instructions can prevent further injury and help recovery.

When to seek care urgently:

Seek care quickly if symptoms worsen or if there are any behavioral changes.
Also, watch for any of the following serious symptoms:

Headaches that worsen	Very drowsy, can't be awakened	Can't recognize people or places
Seizures	Repeated vomiting	Increasing confusion
Neck pain	Slurred speech	Weakness/numbness in arms/legs
Unusual behavior change	Significant irritability	Less responsive than usual

If you observe any of the above signs, call your doctor or return to the emergency department *immediately*.

Common Signs & Symptoms:

It is common for a concussed child or young adult to have one or many concussion symptoms.
There are four types of symptoms: physical, cognitive, emotional and sleep-related.

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Returning to Daily Activities:

The key to recovery is sleeping, resting physically and mentally, and avoiding activities that *might* cause head injury.

- **Avoid:**
 - Physical activities that produce concussion symptoms, as this might increase the recovery time.
 - Lengthy mental activities requiring concentration (ie. Homework, schoolwork, job-related work, and extended video game playing) as these activities worsen symptoms and prolong recovery.
- **Sleep:** Get good sleep and take naps if tired. No late nights or sleepovers. It is NOT necessary to wake up periodically.
- The injured person should not participate in **ANY** high risk activities that might result in head injury until examined and cleared by a qualified health professional. High risk activities include sports, physical education (PE), climbing, or riding a bike.
- It is hard to change from the normal routine. The injured person will need help from parents, teachers, coaches, and athletic trainers to help manage their activity level.

Do's and Don'ts:

It's OK to take pain medicine & sleep. You don't need to wake up every hour. Don't play sports or exercise!

It is OK to:	There is NO need to:	Do NOT
Take pain medicine as prescribed Use ice pack on head and neck for comfort Go to sleep Rest	Stay in bed Wake up every hour	Drive while you have symptoms Exercise or lift weights Drink alcohol Participate in sports or high-risk activities

Returning to School:

If symptoms are severe (cannot concentrate for more than 30-45 minutes), staying home may be indicated until symptoms improve. If symptoms are less severe, rest breaks during school can help recovery.

- As symptoms decrease, the extra supports (rest breaks during school) can be removed slowly.
- Inform the teacher(s), school nurse, school psychologist or counselor, and administrator(s) about your child/teenager's injury and symptoms. ***Please take the Return to School Form to your school.***
- Students who experience symptoms of concussion often need extra help to perform school-related activities and may not perform at their best on classroom or standardized tests.

School Personnel:

School personnel should watch for indications of worsening symptoms, specifically:

- Increased problems paying attention, concentrating, remembering or learning new information
- Needing longer time to complete a task
- Increased irritability or less of an ability to cope with stress

Returning to Sports and Recreation:

The injured person should NEVER return to sports or active recreation with ANY symptoms unless directed by a health professional. **NO PE class, physical activity at recess, or sports practices or games.**

- Tell the Physical Education teacher and all coaches of the injury and symptoms.
- When appropriate, have the student check in with a health care professional on the first day he/she returns.
- It is normal for the child/teenager to feel frustrated, sad, and even angry because they cannot return to sports or recreation right away. With an injury, a full recovery will lower the chances of getting hurt again. *It is better to miss one game than the whole season.*

Stepwise return to activity/Play:

Once the injured person's symptoms resolve at rest and a health professional clears the injured person to return to activity, the injured person may SLOWLY increase activity as outlined below. If symptoms return with a new step, the injured person should start back at step 1 and follow up with a clinician.

****The injured person should be reevaluated by a health professional prior to returning to contact sports.**

1. No activity and rest until symptom free.
2. Light aerobic exercise (e.g., light jogging, swimming)
3. Sport-specific training (e.g., weight training)
4. Non-contact drills
5. Full-contact drills
6. Game play