

Returning to physical activity and sport

This fact sheet has information for parents about a child returning to physical activity and sport after concussion or mild traumatic brain injury. It can be used in conjunction with the Get Back to Sport and Physical Activity infographic for kids and teens.

What is a concussion or mild traumatic brain injury?

- > A traumatic brain injury, sometimes called a TBI, is caused by a bump, jolt or hit to the head or body, that causes the brain to move within the skull. A concussion is a mild type of traumatic brain injury.
- > Symptoms include headaches, poor sleep, dizziness, nausea, feeling tired, sensitivity to light or noise, problems with balance, feeling foggy, poor concentration and difficulty thinking.



When can they return to physical activity and sport?

It's important for children and teenagers to rest for 24-48 hours after they have experienced a concussion or mild brain injury.

Rest means no screen time, and very gentle activities at home.

After 48 hours have passed, follow the steps listed below.

Each step should take at least 24 hours, and if your child has a return of symptoms, drop back to the previous step until they are symptom free.

It's important to know that children and teenagers have a slower recovery than adults, and it's normal for symptoms to still be resolving within four weeks of an injury occurring.

If you have any questions or concerns about progressing through any of the stages, please consult with your doctor or health care professional.

Step 1 – Medical assessment

- > Have your child assessed by a trained healthcare provider, such as a GP, if they've had concussion or a brain injury.

Step 2 – Rest

- > Ensure your child rests and drinks plenty of fluids.
- > Limit their screen time, energetic activities and socialising.

Step 3 – Light activity

- > Start with 10- 20 minutes of light activity, such as slow walking or swimming.

Step 4 – Moderate activity

- > Introduce moderate activity such as basic non-contact sports skill practice.



Step 5 – Non-contact practice

- > Introduce more complex non-contact practice sport, such as individual training drills and resistance training.

Step 6 – Medical clearance

- > Have your child re-assessed by a trained healthcare provider, such as a GP, to get clearance for them to resume their normal sport or physical activities.

Step 7 – Full contact practice

- > Introduce full contact sports practice, such as soccer, netball or football.

Step 8 – Goal achieved!

- > Your child can now enjoy unrestricted sport and physical activity.

Lifetime
SUPPORT

For more information

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