

Returning to school

This fact sheet has information for parents about a child returning to school after concussion or mild traumatic brain injury. It can be used in conjunction with the Back to School after a Concussion 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.



How does it affect children and teenagers at school?

A concussion or mild brain injury can impact a child or teenager's ability to participate and learn at school. It is reasonable for them to miss a few days but extended absence is not expected.

There should be a gradual return to learning activities before working towards full school attendance. See the list of steps below.

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 – Before returning to school

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

Step 2 – Preparation

- > Gradually re-introduce your child to activities such as reading, texting and screen time.
- > Increase their activities as tolerated without worsening their symptoms – you can always take them back a step if needed.

Step 3 – Part-time attendance

- > When your child first returns to school they should attend half days only.
- > Notify the school of your child's injury so that they can support their transition back to school.
- > Make sure your child takes rest breaks and their school work is gradually re-introduced.



Step 4 – Full-time attendance

- > When your child is ready they can attend full days at school.
- > Make sure their school work and activities are gradually increased, but that they continue to take rest breaks in double periods.
- > If needed, ask your child's teachers for extensions on assignments, and ask for additional time and/or extra breaks to manage fatigue in exams or assessments.
- > It can help to identify a key staff member to share information between all the teachers and your child.
- > Make sure you continue to monitor your child's symptoms and encourage them to tell you how they're feeling.
- > Follow up your child's progress with their school, and consider approaching a school counsellor who can check in with your child when you're not there.



If symptoms return at any stage, drop back to the previous step until the child is symptom free.

Lifetime
SUPPORT

For more information

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