

# Concussions in Youth Sports – Part 2

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The following key items are important steps in the treatment of a sports related concussion:

**REST** – This is the most important thing you can do after a concussion. Rest allows your brain to heal and return to normal function. Increasing your sleep and

relative rest is critical. Relative rest refers to resting your physical activity as well as your mental or cognitive activity as much as possible. This includes all physical activity (no physical education class or exercise) and limiting activity in school work, housework, computer use, video games, reading and any other activities that stimulate the brain.

**EDUCATION** – Understanding a concussion injury and how to identify and treat it is very important. By knowing these things, you can receive care quickly if you get a concussion in the future, therefore reducing your recovery time and long term risks of damage to your brain.

**COMPUTERIZED NEUROCOGNITIVE TESTING** – Some medical professionals utilize computerized concussion testing (ImPACT) to help provide objective measurement of how your brain is functioning. This tool helps the physician in determining the severity of the injury and gives guidance for safe return to play in sports.

**STUDENT ADVOCACY** – It is important to remember this is an injury to the brain and affects memory, learning and processing. Your physician should work with your family and school faculty to assist you so your academic achievement does not deteriorate as a result from your concussion. Guidelines regarding studying and testing should be discussed with you, your family, your doctor and your school for appropriate recommendations and accommodations.

**PHYSICAL EXERTION TESTING** – Once you are symptom free at rest, your physician will guide you in a plan for gradual resumption of physical activities as well as cognitive activities. If activity is tolerated without a return of concussion symptoms, your physical activity can be progressed. It is important that this return to activity is monitored by your school's Certified Athletic Trainer or other healthcare provider.

**RETURN TO PLAY** – Once you are symptom free at rest, your neuropsychological testing is back normal and you are symptom free with exertion and sports specific activity, your physician may allow you to return to sports participation. If at anytime during your return to play you experience a return of concussion symptoms, it is critical you notify your parent, coach, Certified Athletic Trainer, or Physician.

It is important to understand a concussion is an injury to the brain and all should be considered serious. Concussions

can occur with or without a loss of consciousness and they can happen in any sport or recreational activity. Recognition of this injury and proper management of concussions when they first happen can prevent further injury, long term problems or even death.

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