



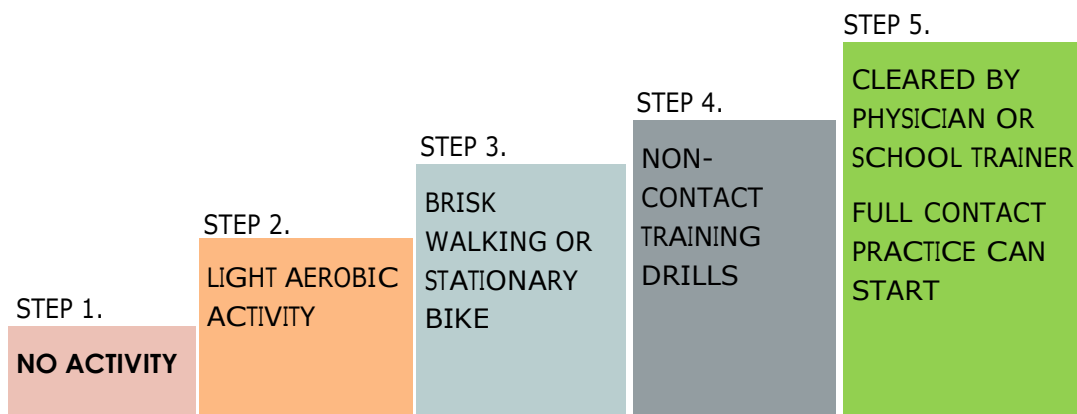
Center City
Pediatrics

Return to Play After a Concussion

(If you think your child has suffered a concussion, call your Doctor to be seen.)

Concussions are treated like any other sports injury – rest leads to recovery. Each child's recovery process is different and requires gradual returning to activity as tolerated. If a child has another traumatic brain injury while recovering from a concussion, he or she can have lasting brain deficits. If a child tries to push through concussion symptoms rather than resting, the time to full recovery can lengthen.

Families need to work together with their physicians, teachers, coaches, and schools to help their children recover from a concussion. Balancing between rest and activity is essential in the recovery process. It is important for your child not to take any medications (including over-the-counter medications) without first consulting your child's physician.



Concussion Symptoms

- Physical symptoms: headache, nausea/vomiting, sensitivity to light or sound, dizziness, blurry vision, tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- Sleep difficulties (problems falling asleep, sleeping more or less than usual, fatigue)
- Cognitive symptoms: difficulty learning new information or paying attention, problems finding words, "fogginess" (difficulty thinking clearly)
- Change in mood: increased irritability, depression or sadness, anxiousness, change in personality

Return to Play Step-by-Step Plan

(Before returning to play your child should be seen by their Physician.)

Step 1. Complete physical and brain rest. "Brain rest" includes no use of cell phones, video games, computers, TV or books/homework. All of these activities make the brain work hard and can elicit concussion symptoms.

Step 2. The child may trial light aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking or slowly riding a stationary bike, as long as symptoms do not return during or after the activity. No weight training should be done at this time.

Step 3: As the student returns to a full day of school without symptoms and is able to tolerate light aerobic exercise, he or she can start full physical activity such as jogging, throwing, kicking and participating in sport-specific activities. No activities that could put the child at risk for head injury (I.e. heading a soccer ball) should be done at this time as the recovery process is not complete.

Step 4: Non-contact training drills, heavier exertion (i.e. sprinting, weightlifting) and non-contact sports may be trialed as tolerated. If symptoms occur during activities, the activity should be stopped immediately.

Step 5: Only when the above activities can be done without any triggering of concussion symptoms can a child return to contact sports or competitive sports. Full sports participation after a concussion should be cleared by the child's physician or school trainer. If symptoms of the concussion have not fully resolved within 2-3 weeks of the injury, please contact your physician.
