

Patient Information

Sport Related Head Injuries & Concussion

Returning to Sport & Normal Life

This guidance relates to any (non-elite) sport related head injury, and is from the UK Concussion guidance in non-elite sports. Elite sport is considered separately and is managed specifically by sports medicine trained staff.

Concussion is a disturbance of brain function caused by a direct or indirect force to the head. It results in a variety of signs and/or symptoms and most often does not involve loss of consciousness. Concussion should be suspected in the presence of:

- Symptoms (e.g. headache, nausea, visual disturbance, feeling slow, 'don't feel right')
- Physical signs (e.g. unsteadiness, drowsiness)
- Impaired brain function (e.g. confusion, poor concentration, difficulty remembering)
- Abnormal behaviour (e.g. change in personality, irritability, emotional, sleep disturbance)

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

- Concussion must be taken extremely seriously to safeguard the long-term welfare of athletes
- After a concussion, the player **must rest and thereafter have a gradual stepwise return to normal life activities (school/work) then subsequently to sport**, as per the table below.
- Return to full sport training should not occur until symptom free and not before 14 days
- Return to competitive sport should not occur before 21 days

GRADUATED RETURN TO EDUCATION/WORK & SPORT SUMMARY (See full table below for detail)	
Stage 1	Relative Rest for 24–48 hours • Minimise screen time • Gentle exercise*
Stage 2	Gradually introduce daily activities • Activities away from school/work (introduce TV, increase reading, games etc)* • Exercise –light physical activity (e.g. short walks) *
Stage 3	Increase tolerance for mental & exercise activities • Increase study/work-related activities with rest periods* • Increase intensity of exercise*
Stage 4	Return to study/work and sport training • Part-time return to education/work* • Start training activities without risk of head impact*
Stage 5	Return to normal work/education and full training • Full work/education • If symptom-free at rest for 14 days consider full training
Stage 6	Return to sports competition (NOT before day 21) as long as symptom free at rest for 14 days and during the pre-competition training of Stage 5

*rest until the following day if this activity more than mildly increases symptoms.

For further information see –

<https://sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/research-publications/concussion-guidelines>

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Prepared by	M.Rennie		