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| **How Can I Help My Child Recover After a Concussion?**  QUICK TIPS:   * Ensure your child avoids activities that can put him or her at risk for another injury to the head and brain. * Ensure your child gets enough rest. * **Help your child keep a positive attitude. Most children with a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks.**   This sheet includes common concussion symptoms your child may experience and tips you can use to help with recovery.  Most children with a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks. However for some, symptoms will last for a month or longer. Concussion symptoms may appear during the normal healing process or as your child gets back to their regular activities. If there are any symptoms that concern you or are getting worse, be sure to seek medical care as soon as possible.  **Recovery tips for your child’s concussion symptoms**  Making short-term changes to your child’s daily activities can help him or her get back to a regular routine more quickly. As your child begins to feel better, you can slowly remove these changes. Use your child’s symptoms to guide return to normal activities. If your child’s symptoms do not worsen during an activity then this activity is OK for them. If symptoms worsen, your child should cut back on how much he or she can do that activity without experiencing symptoms. It is important to remember that each concussion and each child is unique, so your child’s recovery should be customized based on his or her symptoms. Factors that might delay recovery include your child having: a history of a previous concussion or other brain injury, neurological or mental health disorders, learning difficulties, and/or family and social stressors.  The chart below lists concussion symptoms your child may experience and tips to address each symptom and help your child feel better. Many of the tips can help with more than one symptom. These tips offer temporary changes to make while your child has concussion symptoms to help them feel better sooner.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Common Concussion Symptoms** | **How Your Child May Feel** | **Tips to Help with Your Child’s Recovery** | | | **THINKING/REMEMBERING** |  |  | | | Attention & concentration | Only able to focus on school work for short amounts of time |  | Shorten tasks | |  | Break down tasks into smaller activities/steps | |  | Lessen school work load or amount of activity | |  | Avoid cognitive activities (thinking/remembering) that cause symptoms to worsen | | Short-term memory | Trouble remembering instructions or keeping information and ideas in mind during tasks |  | Repeat directions or key information | |  | Provide written notes | | Long-term memory | Trouble with learning new information or remembering information already learned |  | Break down information into smaller chunks/pieces | |  | Repeat directions or key information | |  | Provide reminders or tie information to familiar things, such as: events, objects, or people | | Processing speed | Unable to keep pace with work load  Slower reading/ writing/ calculation Difficulty processing verbal information effectively |  | Talk with your child’s school about extending deadlines to complete homework, assignments, and tests | |  | Reduce and/or slow down the amount of and/or how quickly information is presented and check for understanding throughout the activity | | Foggy or groggy | Less mental energy Trouble thinking clearly  Trouble formulating thoughts |  | Provide rest breaks during activities throughout the day (at school or home) | |  | Set aside a quiet place at home for schoolwork or other learning activities | | **PHYSICAL** |  |  |  | | Headaches | Trouble with concentration  Increased irritability |  | Explore setting up school rest breaks (in a quiet place) | | Shorten school day if symptoms do not get better | |  | Lessen the amount of time your child uses screens (computers, tablets, smartphones, etc.) if these activities make symptoms worse | |  | Give your child ibuprofen or acetaminophen to help with pain (if okayed by their doctor or nurse) | | Bothered by light or noise | Symptoms worsen in bright or loud environments |  | Have your child wear sunglasses and/or a hat when outside or when exposed to bright lights or sunlight | |  | Lessen the amount of time your child uses screens (computers, tablets, etc.) if these activities make symptoms worse | |  | Help your child avoid noisy/crowded places. If needed, your child can wear ear plugs or head phones | | Dizziness/balance problems | Unsteady when walking Nausea or vomiting |  | Take steps to avoid a fall that could put your child at risk for another injury to the head or brain during their recover | |  | Avoid crowded areas | | Fatigue/tired | Lack of energy |  | Shorten school day if symptoms do not get better | |  | Provide rest breaks in a quiet place at school or at home during the day as needed | | EMOTIONAL |  |  |  | | Irritability | Trouble dealing with stress |  | Look for opportunities to lessen the amount of stress your child my feel | |  | Provide a place for your child to take quiet rest breaks as needed | |  | Do deep breathing exercises with your child | |  | Encourage your child to talk to a trusted adult or friend | |  | Remind your child that most people feel better soon after a concussion | | Anxiety/nervousness | Worried about falling behind, pushing through symptoms |  | Talk with your child’s school about extending time to complete homework, assignments, and tests | |  | Help your child stay positive (most children with a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks) | | Depression/withdrawal | Withdrawal from school or friends because of stigma or activity restrictions |  | Give your child time to talk with and stay connected to friends | | Help your child stay connected to teammates even if not participating | | Talk with doctor if depression is worrisome | | **SLEEP** |  |  |  | | Sleeping more than usual | Hard to wake up, shifted sleep schedule |  | Explore setting up a later school start time | |  | Allow for rest breaks during the day as needed | |  | Keep to a set bedtime routine with fixed sleep and wake up times as much as possible | | Sleeping less than usual | Irritable, lack of energy |  | Avoid screen time and loud music right before bed | |  | Sleep in a dark, cool room | |  | Keep to a set bedtime routine with fixed sleep and wake up times as much as possible | | Trouble falling asleep | Tired, groggy |  | Limit daytime naps or return to your child’s regular daytime nap schedule (as appropriate for their age) | |  | Keep to a set bedtime routine with fixed sleep and wake up times as much as possible | |

**What If My Child Isn’t Getting Better?**

Talk with your child’s doctor or nurse if you do not feel like your child is getting better. You may need to see a specialist who has experience treating brain injuries. Ask your child’s doctor or nurse for names of brain injury specialists in your area.

More information on concussion, tips to help your child feel better, and steps you can take to help your child safely return to school and sports can be found at: [www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP](http://www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP).

*The information provided in this handout or through linkages to other sites is not a substitute for medical or professional care. Questions about diagnosis and treatment for concussion should be directed to your child’s doctor or other healthcare provider.*