

# Concussion Care and Return to Sport



A concussion is a type of brain injury that can lead to physical, mental and emotional symptoms due to chemical changes in the brain and mechanical stress to the neck. Concussions occur most commonly with head trauma.

Your body and brain are good at healing after a concussion, but Physical Therapists and other medical professionals can help. Most of the time, concussion symptoms resolve with time and active rest. But, people that receive physical therapy are nearly four times more likely to be back to sports in 8 weeks.

## What symptoms should I expect?

Symptoms can happen right away or be delayed for several hours after injury. It is important to talk to your provider honestly about all symptoms you are experiencing. The most common symptoms are:

### Emotional:

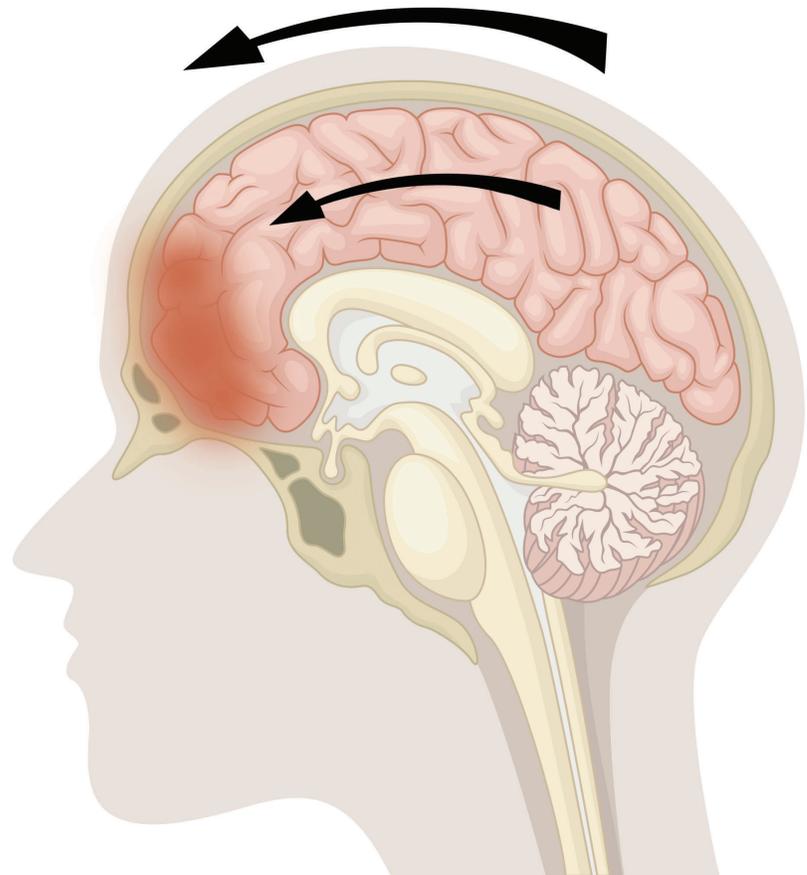
- Anger
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Irritability

### Mental:

- Confusion
- Fogginess
- Memory concerns
- Difficulty concentrating

### Physical:

- Headache
- Dizziness/balance
- Nausea
- Neck pain
- Vision changes
- Difficulty sleeping



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Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin (GHC-SCW)  
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# Concussion Care and Return to Sport (Continued)

## What should I do after experiencing a concussion?

### Rest

- Avoid any activity with a risk of head injury.
- Walk for about 20 minutes a day (take breaks as needed).
- Avoid gym class until you're cleared to return.
- Develop a return to school plan with your teachers.

### Sleep

- Use your bedroom only for sleep.
- Keep a consistent sleeping schedule.
- Keep your bedroom cool, quiet and dark.
- If worrying is keeping you awake, write down the full list of worries on your mind.

### Eat

- Eat a balanced diet.
- Eat regular meals and snacks.
- Stay hydrated.
- Include healthy carbohydrates in your diet.

### Relax

- Find relaxation methods that work for you (e.g. deep breathing or mental imagery).
- Practice relaxing every day.
- Learn the stressors that make you feel worse, so you can avoid them.



## What can medical professionals do to help?

Your primary care provider will diagnose you with a concussion. During that appointment, you can ask about using physical therapy to help your recovery.

A GHC-SCW specialized concussion provider like a Physical Therapist will help you manage any of your symptoms. They can help with neck pain, headaches, dizziness, fatigue, sleep difficulties, balance, tolerance to exercise, cognitive and multitasking abilities and back pain. They can help with your plans to return to your sport or to school, as well as relaxation and deep breathing techniques.

You can call the GHC-SCW Physical Therapy department directly at **(608) 662-5060** to set up an evaluation with a specialized concussion provider.

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