



**Possible Head Injury? When in Doubt, Sit it Out!**

Any suspected head injury should be taken seriously. If there are any concerns, there should be no participation in activities or sport with risk of additional injury and seek evaluation by a medical provider trained in management of concussion.

Thankfully, serious problems after a concussion are rare, but can occur. The initial 24-48 hours post injury, an individual should be observed for any worsening symptoms. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be given for headache; however, no other medications should be given without consultation with your physician.

**RED FLAGS warranting immediate medical help:**

- ANY worsening symptoms
- Trouble walking/talking
- Numbness in arms/legs
- Unusual change in behavior
- severe headache
- Increased confusion
- Neck Pain
- cannot be awakened
- repeated vomiting
- seizure activity
- any fainting
- poor memory of NEW events

**What to expect the initial days after injury:**

Most individuals recover fairly quickly and uneventfully within a few weeks. However, recovery is very individual dependent on multiple variables. If any of the below problems seem increased in severity or they persist longer than 2-3 weeks, then consultation with a concussion specialist would be recommended:

Physical		Thinking	Emotional	Sleep
• Headache	• Fatigue	• Feeling mentally foggy	• Irritability	• Drowsiness
• Nausea	• Noise	• Problems with focus/ concentration	• Sadness	• Sleeping more than usual
• Visual Problems	• Sensitivity	• Memory problems	• Feeling more emotionally reactive or sensitive	• Sleeping less than usual
• Light Sensitivity	• Vomiting	• Slowed thinking speed	• Nervous or anxious	• Trouble falling or staying asleep
• Balance problems	• dizziness			
• Numbness/tingling				

**Initial Treatment options:**

- Pause daily schedule with mindful breathing breaks – stop & breathe slowly several times daily
- Headache and neck pain management – Light manual or physical therapy, craniosacral neuro calming massage maybe helpful within the first 7 days of injury.
- Eye strain/pain/fatigue, dizziness, headaches, car sickness and motion intolerance should be evaluated by a physical therapist trained in concussion management. Vision and Vestibular therapy can help these individuals return to work, school and life.

## Support for a Speedy Recovery:

Stay Safe	Rest	Screens	Supplements/Nutrition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid risky behaviors and activities!</li> <li>• No driving</li> <li>• Avoid high stimulus environments</li> <li>• Pause activity with restful breathing breaks</li> <li>• Light exercise is good as long as symptoms managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete mental/physical rest <b>1<sup>st</sup> 24-48hours</b> only.</li> <li>• Sleep as much as needed</li> <li>• Decrease visual exertion – screens, reading</li> <li>• Reduce Demands on your day – physical, mental, social/emotional</li> <li>• Sleep well at night, limit napping after 1<sup>st</sup> few days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Avoid screens:</b> computer, phone, video games, TV</li> <li>• <b>Add blue blockers:</b> gamma ray glasses on Amazon or blue light filter app on phone (iphone use “night shift” mode)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole food diet, limit processed foods/sugars stay hydrated!</li> <li>• <b>NO:</b> caffeinated drinks, stimulants, alcohol.</li> <li>• Omega 3’s- DHA 2000 mg/day</li> <li>• B complex vitamins</li> <li>• Probiotics</li> <li>• Vitamin D3 2-5000 u/day</li> <li>• Melatonin (sleep)</li> </ul>

## What is the Process to Return to Life, Activity & Sport?

Once symptoms at rest have improved/resolved, Return to Activities of Daily Living and Sport should be done in a graduated method generally consisting of following steps:

1. Symptoms cleared at rest and with activities of daily living – Life, school and/or work
2. Assure additional injuries or medical conditions are addressed during the recovery process, ie., neck pain, sleep issues, anxiety/depression are most common
3. Symptom-free with general activity & conditioning – cardio and light strength
4. Primitive Reflexes, Visual, Vestibular Function is back to normal
5. Cognitive function acceptable or back to baseline (ImPACT Scores within reliable change of baseline levels or acceptable compared to normative data)
6. Symptom-free with light sport specific activity / No contact
7. Progression in sport specific training with NO return of symptoms

**Think Head First** can provide remote post-injury ImPACT cognitive testing to individuals when appropriate, to guide recovery, as determined by medical providers.

*Our vision is to work with the community – individuals/teams/schools/employers to raise awareness of this common injury and educate all regarding appropriate safe and efficient return to life/work/sport. In so doing, reduce risk of prolonged symptoms, repetitive injury and long-term consequences of mismanagement.*

Contact Think Head First with any questions or to schedule an appointment:  
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