

Return to sport following concussion

Patient information

This leaflet has been given to you because you have had a concussion and after a period of rest you will want to return to normal activities and sport.

Symptoms of concussion you may be experiencing:

- Headaches
- Feeling dizzy, tired or sick
- Sleep disturbance
- Difficulties with concentration, thinking and problem-solving
- Restlessness
- Problems with memory or balance
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling more emotional or irritable

You should let your coach, trainer or teacher know about your injury and symptoms. It is important to recognise that you may need to limit the amount of activity you do following a concussion to aid recovery. If you return to sport before fully recovered you can increase the risk of a further concussion or other injury.

Returning to sport

You should only return to sport when you are symptom-free when performing daily activities and simple physical activity.

You should return to sport following a graded return to play plan.

Example of a graded return to play plan:

Day 1 - no physical activity

Day 2 - low levels of physical activity eg. walking, light jogging.

Day 3 - moderate levels of physical activity with body/head movement eg. moderate intensity jogging, stationary biking, or light weightlifting.

Day 4 - heavy non-contact physical activity eg. running/sprinting, regular weightlifting routine, non-contact sport-specific drills.

Day 5 - Full contact in training/practice drills.

Day 6 - Full contact in game play.

Day 7 - Return to competition.

It is important to pay careful attention to how you feel throughout the plan and only move up a step if your symptoms do not come back during or after the activity.

If your symptoms return stop these activities and rest. Resume the plan from the previous step after you have not experienced symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours.

Emergency Department
and Minor Injury Unit



Treating Pain

If needed, painkiller options include the following:

Paracetamol is usually recommended for painful sprains or strains.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) relieve pain and may also limit inflammation and swelling. You can buy some types (eg, ibuprofen) at pharmacies, without a prescription either topically as a cream, or as tablets. You should check the medication advice leaflet to ensure you are safe to take these i.e some patients with asthma or stomach ulcers may not be able to.

If this does not help, you may need an additional stronger painkiller – such as codeine – you should discuss this with your pharmacist or GP.

Further Information

For further advice and information about your condition:

Please choose from the following:

- 'NHS Patient Choices' website: www.nhs.uk
- 'Making Lives Better' patient website: www.patient.info
- Telephone NHS 111
- Contact your General Practitioner

Contact details:

- The James Cook University Hospital: 01642 850850
Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW
 - The Friarage: 01609 779911
Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1JG
- Redcar Primary Care Hospital: 01642 511000
West Dyke Road, Redcar, TS10 4NW

Author: Emergency Department and Minor Injury Unit

**The James Cook University Hospital, Marton Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW.
Switchboard: 01642 850850**

Version 1, Issue Date: October 2018, Revision Date: October 2020