

CONCUSSION FACT SHEET

for college students

Stanford Brain Performance Center

EXERCISE – SLEEP – NUTRITION

- Early cardio exercise (usually stationary bike or brisk walking/jogging) to support recovery for at least 20 minutes, 4x per week beginning the first week of recovery
- Sleep is likely to be disrupted during concussion recovery – utilize sleep hygiene strategies
- Maintain proper hydration and nutrition to support recovery. Avoid alcohol and excessive caffeine

ANXIETY AND MOOD

- Mood and anxiety disruptions are common following a concussion
- Track mood and identify triggers that worsen it
- Schedule tasks when you are most efficient and give yourself plenty of time
- Practice relaxation strategies (i.e. deep breathing, visual imagery, muscle relaxation) to reduce day-to-day stress and have a positive outlook
- Seek help from your institution's mental health services as needed
- Go to the nearest emergency department for any severe symptoms

RISK FACTORS FOR MORE SEVERE INJURY

- Drowsiness or inability to wake up fully
- Headache that persists or worsens
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or seizure
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out), even if brief
- Drug or alcohol intoxication
- Dangerous injury mechanism

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION:

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Concussion typically results in the onset of short-lived impairments of neurological function that resolve spontaneously.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE A CONCUSSION:

A person who:

- Appears dazed or stunned following impact
- Forgets or is confused about an assignment, position, or game
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

Symptoms of:

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems, dizziness, or double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems
- Just not “feeling right”, or “feeling down”

HOW TO HANDLE A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION:

- Call student health services for advice or to make an appointment
- Seek care immediately for severe symptoms
- Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself
- Record injury-related events including loss of consciousness, memory loss, seizures, and number of previous concussions to discuss with your clinician

HOW TO RETURN TO ACTIVITIES:

- Gradually return to physical and cognitive activity after 2-3 days of rest
- No contact sports, risky activity, or driving until cleared for return by a physician

HOW TO RETURN TO SCHOOL:








- Concussion may interfere with your ability to learn, concentrate, or remember
- Inform professors and coaches about a possible concussion right away
- Seek learning accommodations from your institution as needed
- Screen usage is okay when recovering from concussion as long as it does not significantly exacerbate symptoms



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Stanford Brain Performance Center CONCUSSION SUBTYPE CLASSIFICATIONS

Subtype	Symptom	Therapeutic*
 Vestibular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dizziness • Head movements cause symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vestibular physical therapy
 Ocular-motor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty focusing on moving objects or objects moving closer • Fatigue with reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic vision therapy
 Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems concentrating or remembering • Problems completing tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive-behavioral therapy • Neuropsychologist***
 Headache/Migraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light and/or noise sensitivity associated with Headaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analgesia and avoidance of triggers • Headache Clinic***
 Anxiety/Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxious and/or depressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatrist and counseling***
 Cervical Strain**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving neck causes symptoms, neck pain, and/or headache 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neck physical therapy
 Sleep Disturbance **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble going to sleep • Waking at night • Fatigue during the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep Medicine Clinic***

*Early cardio exercise and sleep hygiene is recommended for the recovery of all subtypes

**Cervical strain and sleep disturbance are concussion-associated conditions

***Consider referral for severe or prolonged symptoms greater than 2-4 weeks

Stanford Concussion Clinic Locations

Neuroscience Health Center
213 Quarry Road
Palo Alto, CA 94304
Phone: (650) 723-6469

Lucile Packard Children's Hospital
321 Middlefield Road, Suite 225
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Phone: (650) 723-0991

Sports Medicine Clinic
450 Broadway Street
Redwood City, CA 94063
Phone: (650) 723-5643

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