

CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A CONCUSSION IS A TYPE OF TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY CAUSED BY A FORCE TO THE HEAD OR BODY THAT LEADS TO A CHANGE IN BRAIN FUNCTION. IT IS NOT TYPICALLY ACCOMPANIED BY LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

REPORTABLE SYMPTOMS

Symptoms your child may tell you **they are experiencing**.

- Headache or head pressure
- Nausea or sick to stomach
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Neck or back pain
- Confusion, concentration or memory problems
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy or foggy
- Dizziness or seeing stars
- Low energy, sleepy or tired
- Trouble falling asleep
- Waking up throughout the night

OBSERVABLE SIGNS

Signs **you may see** in your child.

- Dazed or stunned; looks to have “glassy eyes”
- Confusion or disorientation
- Vomiting
- Loss of balance or clumsiness
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty paying attention
- Loss of consciousness
- More emotional (angry, sad, irritable)

DAILY REGULATION OF ACTIVITY TO RECOVERY

During a concussion, it is important to **schedule or regulate daily routines** to aid in recovery. Proper sleep, hygiene, nutrition, and hydration has been shown to improve concussion symptoms and recovery.

- **Sleep** - A constant **8-10 hours of sleep** is better than frequent napping. Setup a bedtime and a wake-up time.
- **Nutrition/diet** - Eat a **well-balanced diet** and don't skip a meal. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, providing energy that is needed for your brain.
- **Hydration** - Since your brain is 80% water, it is important to keep it hydrated to aid in recovery. Drinking at least **half your body weight in ounces** per day is recommended.
- **Monitored Physical activity - Very light exercise** may be helpful as long as symptoms are not triggered. Consult with your health care provider.
- **Stress management** - Monitor what triggers symptoms. Balance those stressors/triggers.

COGNITIVE PACING & RETURN TO DAILY LIVING

- During the first **2-3 days** after a concussion, it is recommended to rest (limit cognitive activity).
- After 2-3 days, an individual should return to a **normal daily routine**, such as screen time, texting, reading, etc.
- Rule of thumb: If symptoms **worsen or are provoked**, stop activity and rest for a short period then begin activity again.
- If symptoms still reoccur, **stop activity for the day** and try again later.
- It is important to return back to school as soon as possible. Work with the **concussion management team** on school reintegration.

For additional information on the concussion management team and the role it plays in helping an



individual with a concussion, check out **REAP, a community-based model for concussion management**. Download a digital copy at: <https://hawaiiconcussion.com/reat>



**TAKE CONCUSSIONS SERIOUSLY. YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE SHOULD BE A PRIORITY.
IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD COULD HAVE A CONCUSSION, HAVE THEM SEE AN ATHLETIC TRAINER OR TEAM PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY.**

IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM PLAY

Hawaii Concussion Law (Act 262) is directed toward the 11-18 year old population. The law mandates if a concussion is suspected, that individual **must be removed from play immediately** and evaluated by a medical professional trained in sport concussion management. That individual cannot return to play until a written medical clearance is obtained.

Continuing to play with a concussion is dangerous for young athletes because of the following:

- **Second Impact Syndrome** - Occurs when another concussion is sustained before a prior concussion is resolved. This causes rapid and severe brain swelling which results in permanent brain damage and/or death.
- **Longer, more complicated recovery time** - Average time to recover is longer and athletes have more difficulty in classroom and display more emotional changes.
- **Increased risk of suffering another concussion** - Rate of risk rises exponentially. A lesser amount of impact force is needed to sustain another concussion.
- **Decreased athletic performance** - Affects vision, reaction, balance and coordination. Greater risk of sustaining musculoskeletal injuries while playing with a concussion.

GRADUAL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

Before returning to any kind of physical activity, the following should be done:

- Obtain **written medical clearance** from a medical professional trained in concussion management.
- You child should be **symptom free** for at least 24-48 hours.
- Your child should be in school full time without any academic adjustments and is **not experiencing symptoms** while in school.
- Have your child progress through the **Gradual Return to Play Protocol** before participating without limitations.

The **symptom checklist** can be used to monitor your child's symptoms. It can be used immediately after a concussion as well as for periodic monitoring. The checklist provides valuable information for the physician during appointments.

Sport-specific Gradual Return to Play Protocols as well as a copy of the symptom checklist are available for download by visiting <https://hawaiiconcussion.com/resources>.



1	Cognitive rest/pacing Physical rest/pacing
2	Return to Learn School full time
3	MD written clearance No academic adjustments in school No symptoms for 24 hours May begin light aerobic activity
4	Strenuous activities like endurance running or jogging
5	Sport specific activities No contact
6	Contact practice
7	No restrictions

Steps three through seven are each separated by 24 hours, and monitored by the athletic trainer (ATC).

Concussion symptoms affect an individual's physical, cognitive and emotional wellbeing. A concussion can also affect an individual's sleep pattern. The most common symptoms reported immediately after a concussion are headache and dizziness.



Parents/guardians with children between 11-18 years old are required to complete a concussion education course.

Take the course now at: <https://hcamp.info/parents>



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Get Schooled on Concussions
<https://www.getschooledonconcussions.com>
HEADS UP to Youth Sports
<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports>