

Handouts  
Concussion  
Dadms

## Concussion Assessment Center Activity Education

Concussion is a common injury after trauma to the head. It can occur with or without loss of consciousness. A concussion can affect physical, emotional and mental well-being. MRIs and CT scans do not show evidence of this injury. Symptoms occur due to chemical and energy changes in the brain. It is important that the recommendations of all medical professionals be followed in order to maximize recovery. Your assessment today found no serious complication. However, should you have any doubt, or should symptoms increase in severity or number, then seek immediate treatment or call the nurse triage line at the end of this document.

**Call 911 or go to the hospital immediately if you show any of these symptoms:**

- Worsening headache
- Confused or very drowsy
- Cannot recognize people and places
- Seizure
- Slurred or slowed speech
- Frequent vomiting
- Unexplained weakness

Please complete the **Post-Concussion Symptom Scale** provided to track symptoms each evening. We encourage you that these symptoms will improve in time and with attention to the instructions below.

### Concussion Care Instructions:

- **Allow brain time to heal.** Too much activity too soon may worsen symptoms. In the first 24-48 hours after injury, you will require more down time than usual. Rest, avoid physical activity, and avoid screen time (smart phone, TV, Computer).
- **Follow-up:** Please schedule an office appointment with your PCP.
- **Limit extended brain activity.** After 48 hours from time of head injury and for a period of 7 days, limit extended brain activity to 15-20 minute increments with 5 minutes of quiet time periods in between increments. Examples of extended brain activities include reading, studying, videos, texting & gaming.
- **No alcohol or drugs.**
- **Recommend avoiding driving** until advised by PCP.
- **Eat properly.** During the healing time the brain will need proper nutrition. Be certain you are eating healthy foods and drinking plenty of water.
- **Sleep:** Follow the sleep hygiene guidelines provided below to improve quality of restful sleep.
- **Post-Concussion Symptom Scale:** Complete this questionnaire every night to track symptom progression and bring them to your PCP and/or therapy appointments.
- **Sub-symptom aerobic exercise:** Once you have transitioned through the first 24-48 hours of dedicated physical and cognitive rest, then early research shows that initiating sub-symptom aerobic exercise is beneficial. Guidelines for sub-symptom aerobic exercise are provided below.

### Sleep Hygiene

- Set a sleep schedule (Optimal sleep time = 8.5 hours)
- Shut down the house 1-hour prior to scheduled bedtime
- Recommend meditating, gentle stretching or breathing exercises prior to sleep - Avoid using your phone, computer, or TV.
- Keep bedroom dark and cool - no flashing or blinking lights
- Avoid caffeine after dinner, preferably no caffeine after 11:00 am.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs
- Set your wake-up time
- Put a notepad and pen next to the bed to write down ideas and thoughts in order to clear your mind.
- Avoid subthreshold aerobic exercise immediately before bed.

### Sub-symptom Aerobic Exercise Participation Week 1

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# Post Concussion Symptom Scale

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age/DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_

No symptoms = 0 ----- Mild = 1 or 2 ----- Moderate = 3 or 4 ----- Severe 5 or 6

SYMPTOMS	Day/time:	Day/time:	Day/time:
Headache	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Nausea	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Vomiting	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Balance problems	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Dizziness	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Fatigue	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Trouble falling asleep	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Excessive sleep	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Loss of sleep	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Drowsiness	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Light sensitivity	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Noise sensitivity	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Irritability	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Sadness	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Nervousness	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
More emotional	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Numbness	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Feeling "slow"	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Feeling "foggy"	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Difficulty concentrating	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Difficulty remembering	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Visual problems	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
TOTAL SCORE			

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Dizziness

Difficulty sleeping is common in people with diagnoses including cancer, diabetes, weight gain, and heart disease. Keeping a regular sleep routine is also important for individuals with inner ear problems and dizziness. Lack of sleep is a major trigger for migraines including vestibular (inner ear) migraines. Those who have concussions also have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, which can make their dizziness worse. Adults with positional vertigo (BPPV) may not have good quality sleep because they are either afraid to move in bed or use extra pillows to prevent dizziness. Eight hours of sleep is suggested for maximum benefit.

### Tips for Good Sleep Hygiene

1. Keep a regular sleep routine, even on weekends and vacations
2. Don't exercise too late in the day
3. Avoid caffeine and nicotine before bed
4. Avoid alcoholic drinks before bed
5. Avoid heavy meals and beverages before bed
6. Avoid medicines that delay or disrupt your sleep
7. Don't nap after 3 PM
8. Make sure you leave time to relax before bed; as well as turn off bright lights or electronic devices at least 30-60 minutes before bedtime
9. Take a hot bath before bed
10. Make sure your bedroom is dark and the room temperature is cool
11. Get plenty of sunlight exposure during the day
12. Don't stay in bed if you cannot sleep- get up and read, draw, or do any other calming activity in low light
13. Do not use your bed for watching TV or activities on your computer/phone
14. Exercise and physical activity during the day can help the quality of your sleep

Gadgets such as cell phones and computers can give off light that can decrease the melatonin in the brain which helps sleep/wake cycles. You can set your computer or phone to use the night light or blue light filter setting to prevent dizziness and sleep loss

### Reference:

<https://fastlifehacks.com/matthew-walker-12-tips-for-good-sleep/>

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Published YEAR

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## **Energy Conservation Tips**

Assistive devices include:  
reachers/grabbers, sock aids, long  
handled shoehorns, long handled  
sponges, grab bars, shower seats,  
and hand held shower heads.

Ask us where you can get these  
devices!

**Dressing:** use assistive devices, lay  
clothing out beforehand, sit for as  
much of the task as possible (ex:  
underwear and pants up to knees  
before standing), wear loose or  
button up clothing, keep clothing

**Bathing/Showering:** sit down, use a  
hand held wand or other assistive device,  
keep materials out and organized within  
reach, get rid of clutter, utilize grab bars  
for getting in and out safely.

**Laundry:** use a basket to carry clothes,  
use good body mechanics to lift, keep  
laundry supplies at waist height, place  
laundry on similar height surface to load  
(rather than repetitively bending), sit to  
fold, use assistive device to reach deep  
into machines/pick up fallen items.

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# Darwin's Concussion Handouts

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**Cooking/Meal Prep:** keep frequently used items out, place items at waist height, avoid excessive bending/reaching, sit for long prep tasks, carry ingredients in bag/cart, make 1 pot meals, use disposable items to decrease clean up time.

**Housekeeping:** carry supplies in bag/cart, break tasks into separate days (don't clean whole house in one day), take lots of rest breaks, avoid excessive bending/reaching/lifting, make a schedule of importance, alternate heavy tasks with light, use assistive devices,

Organize tasks, prioritize, sit as much as you can for long tasks, take breaks, use good body mechanics, utilize breathing techniques, ask for help, don't rush!

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## **ENERGY CONSERVATION TIPS**

Energy conservation is the idea of simplifying daily activities in order to save or conserve your body's energy. These tips are ways to change the methods of performing activities so that you require less energy from your body. Saving energy not only allows you time for the activity you enjoy, but can also help to delay and even prevent harm to your body. The less time you spend performing activities, the more time you allow your body to rest.

### **PLAN ACTIVITIES AHEAD AND USE REST BREAKS**

- Make a list of needed items and chores to perform before getting up. This will eliminate unnecessary tasks and trips.
- Alternate heavy and light tasks with rest breaks in between activities.
- Keep frequently used items within easy reach.
- Complete heavy jobs early in the morning or following a nap when not fatigued.
- When fatigued, take frequent rest breaks. (I.E. consider taking ten minutes out of each hour to rest, preferably reclining with your feet up.)

### **MINIMIZE THE EFFORT REQUIRED**

- Sit to complete activities. (I.E. place a plastic chair in the bathroom to sit on while bathing, dressing, grooming and performing hygiene. Use a chair to sit on while ironing, doing laundry, preparing and cooking meals, and drying dishes.)
- Slide heavy objects, don't lift and carry. Use a cart with wheels to transport items.
- Organize shelves with more frequently used items towards the front.
- Organize workstations, leaving items often used in accessible places.
- Use a pull cart to bring groceries in the house.
- Use adaptive equipment as instructed by your occupational therapist for dressing, bathing and reaching.

### **USE PROPER POSTURE TO SAVE ENERGY**

- Use by lifting your legs, not your back
- Change positions often to give muscles a rest.
- Avoid holding objects for long period of time.
- When lifting items, keep them close to your body.

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