

# Concussion Awareness, Response, and Management

## Additional Considerations for Neurodivergent Students and Students with Disabilities



A significant impact or motion to the head or body that can cause the brain to move inside the skull

**STOP**

### REMOVE FROM ACTIVITY IMMEDIATELY AND ASSESS FOR RED FLAGS

For neurodivergent students/students with disabilities:  
**Do not leave the individual alone.** Call for assistance from a staff member who has a close connection with the student to provide social emotional support and determine if there are Red Flags or concussion signs/symptoms outside of the student's baseline presentation

### RED FLAGS

- |                                 |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Neck pain or tenderness         | Loss of consciousness   | Repeated vomiting                             |
| Seizure, 'fits', or convulsion  | Increased confusion or deteriorating conscious state (becoming less responsive, drowsy) | Severe or increasing headache                 |
| Loss of vision or double vision | Weakness or numbness/tingling in more than one arm or leg                               | Increasingly restless, agitated, or combative |

**IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE:**  
Call an ambulance or seek immediate medical care

**IF NO TO ALL RED FLAGS:**  
Assess for signs and symptoms of concussion

### FOLLOW MEDICAL ADVICE, AND:

Follow initial period of relative rest (i.e., activities of daily living including walking and other light physical and cognitive activities are permitted as tolerated) for a maximum of 24-48 hours post-injury.

Engage in light physical and cognitive activity that does not result in more than mild and brief\* exacerbation (worsening) of concussion symptoms.

- Limit screen time for the first 24-48 hours (smartphones, computers, TV)
- Engage in light cognitive activities (e.g. reading)
- Engage in light physical activity (e.g. walking)

**Note:** Sleep is important! Do not wake during the night if sleeping comfortably

\*Mild exacerbation (worsening) of symptoms: No more than a 2-point increase when compared with the pre-activity value on a 0-10-point symptom severity scale. "Brief" exacerbation of symptoms: Worsening of symptoms for up to 1 hour.

### CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headache / Pressure in head  | <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble falling asleep   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot be comforted or excessive crying  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balance problems / Dizziness | <input type="checkbox"/> More emotional           | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest in preferred items/activities   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea or vomiting           | <input type="checkbox"/> More irritable           | <input type="checkbox"/> Listlessness or tiring easily  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drowsiness                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sadness                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of ability to carry on with baseline skills (across any social, emotional, language, or physical development domains) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blurred vision               | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous or anxious       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Light / Sound sensitivity    | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue or low energy        | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty remembering   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Don't feel right"           | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling slowed down      |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neck pain                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling like "in a fog"  |   |

**IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE:**  
SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION from a doctor, nurse practitioner, or licensed healthcare professional with relevant training

**IF NO SYMPTOMS:**  
Limit physical activity and watch for concussion signs and symptoms for up to 48 hours

**IF SYMPTOMS OBSERVED WITHIN 48 HOURS**

**IF NO SYMPTOMS OBSERVED AFTER 48 HOURS**

### AFTER 48 HOURS:

Follow Return to Work strategy  
Follow Return to Activity strategy  
Follow Return to School strategy  
Follow Return to Sport strategy

### MENTAL HEALTH

During the course of recovery from a concussion, seek medical attention for mental health challenges that are beyond baseline, such as:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervousness or anxiousness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability   | <input type="checkbox"/> Trouble falling asleep     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sadness        | <input type="checkbox"/> Depression                 |

**RESUME NORMAL ACTIVITY**

For more information on concussions, visit [cattonline.com](http://cattonline.com).