

Concussion and sport

You have been diagnosed with concussion. While we feel you are safe to be discharged, there are some things to think about in terms of your daily activities – in particular your return to sport.

What are the symptoms of concussion?

- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty focusing
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fatigue (common)
- Mild headaches
- Dizziness or balance problems
- Light sensitivity
- Ringing/buzzing noise in ears
- Nausea
- Changes to taste/smell
- Irritability
- Feeling emotional or low in mood

While you are still having symptoms you must not operate heavy machinery or return to sport.

In the weeks following a concussion it is important to rest. Individuals with concussion are at higher risk of further concussions and injuries. Repeated concussions are more serious and associated with slower recovery and potentially chronic (long term) symptoms.

When can I start playing again?

Some sports have 'return to play' protocols in place that **must** be followed – you should contact your club to clarify these.

Once all symptoms have gone you may begin to train again. You should follow a 6-step graduated return. Each step should take at least 24 hours (48 hours for anyone under 19 years old).

Step 1: Complete rest. Only once you have **no symptoms** may you progress to Step 2.

Step 2: Light exercise, for example, walking or riding an exercise bike.

Step 3: Sport specific training, for example, running for football or hockey.

Step 4: Non-contact training drills.

Step 5: Full-contact training.

Step 6: Game play.

If at any point the symptoms of concussion return, you should go back to the previous step and only attempt to proceed after a minimum of 24 hours have passed.

Specific sports

- **Rugby:** Medical assessment followed by a minimum of 2 weeks of rest – no training or gameplay. If symptom-free after this period can follow the 6 step process (outlined above). We advise you get a further review by a doctor prior to full return to play. Minimum time out for adults is 19 days and for under 19s is 23 days.

- **Football:** 14 days of rest – no training or gameplay. Cannot start graduated return to play until symptom-free **and** back at school/work **and** not taking any medications for symptoms. Medical review recommended prior to step 5.
- **Boxing:** Contact your club for British Boxing Board of Control (BBBoC) regulations.

Further information / References:

www.headway.org

www.nhs.uk/conditions/concussion

www.englandrugby.com

www.thefa.com

Tell us your views

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your treatment and care, please speak to a senior member of staff or to the nurse looking after you. The matrons are also available during normal working hours and they welcome your views.

You can also pick up a copy of the Trust leaflet called 'Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)' which explains how you can raise concerns or give feedback on your experience at the hospital

Friends and Family Test

Whatever your experience you can give feedback by answering the Friends & Family test question – 'Overall, how was your experience of our service?' – by going online www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-in-touch/friends-and-family-survey.htm.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Emergency Department, June 2022.

Next review due: June 2024