

NJ Neurology, Inc.
Romana Kulikova, MD
400 Center Street, Garwood, NJ 07027
908-232-0200 (tel) / 908-232-0211 (fax)

Adolescent Concussion Protocol

- Individuals will be evaluated for concussion by history and physical as well as with ImPACT, neurocognitive, computerized testing.
- Impact testing will be repeated at intervals until scores have returned to baseline or the individual is symptom free and scores are in the anticipated range based on educational history. In the majority of cases symptoms resolve before testing returns to normal.
- Individuals sustaining a concussion should cease doing any activity that causes concussive symptoms to increase (e.g. headaches, dizziness, nausea, etc.).
Continuing activities that increases symptoms can delay the recovery!
- School attendance and activities may need to be modified.
 - If students are unable to attend school for an entire day without symptoms, they may attend for a half-day. Some students may only be able to attend for one period, some not at all, due to severe headaches or other symptoms. Frequent breaks with rest periods in the nurse's office may be necessary. Often, alternating a class with a rest period may be helpful. Math causes more symptoms in many patients than other classes. As recovery proceeds, gradually hours spent in school may be increased.
 - Depending on their symptoms, some students may need to be driven to school to avoid walking and should be given an elevator pass to avoid stairs. They should not attend gym or exercise classes.
 - Workload and homework may need to be reduced. Frequent breaks while doing homework may be helpful. Term papers should be postponed. Pre-printed class notes and tutors may help to relieve the pressure of schoolwork.
 - Tests: If there are concentration and memory problems, quizzes, tests, PSAT tests, SAT tests and final exams should be delayed or postponed. If test results are poor, a note to the school should request that the scores be voided. Extra time (un-timed tests) may be necessary initially when test taking is resumed.
- Activities:
 - If noise causes increased symptoms, students with concussions should not listen to loud music (especially on their I-Pods). They should avoid attending dances, parties, music concerts and sports events until the hyperacusis is gone.
 - If light causes increased symptoms or students have photophobia they should avoid bright sunlight and exposure to flashing lights (computer games). Sunglasses may be necessary.
 - Spinning carnival rides should be avoided while recovering from a concussion.
 - Individuals should not participate in any activity that puts them at risk of sustaining another concussion until they are both symptom free and their Impact testing has returned to normal.
 - Athletes may begin the concussion graduated return-to-play exercise program once they are symptom free
 - Day 1: walking for 20 – 30 minutes at a rate of 2.5 mph
 - Day 2: Jogging for 20 – 30 minutes
 - Day 3: Running for 20 – 30 minutes
 - Day 4: Performing sports specific practice drills
 - Day 5: Return to contact sports if **ImPACT testing has normalized and individual remains symptom free**

If headaches or other symptoms occur during any step, the activity needs to be stopped. The athlete should then wait 24 hours and start at the previous level again.