

Caring for Your Concussion

A concussion is a brain injury, and like any medical diagnosis, it will require a Multidisciplinary Medical Team to guide a safe return to school, work, gymnastics/sports, and life.

Symptoms

Concussion symptoms consist of headaches, dizziness, nausea/vomiting, balance problems, vision changes, difficulty concentrating, feeling “in a fog”, irritability, and changes to sleep patterns.

If you suspect you or your gymnast has experienced a concussion, stop participation in your practice/competition and seek medical treatment by a qualified medical professional.

Worsening symptoms may indicate a more serious injury. You should go to the Emergency Room if: headaches become more severe, pupils are unequal in size, or if you experience any of the following:

- Repeated vomiting.
- Slurred speech.
- Decreased level of consciousness/
increased drowsiness.
- Seizures or convulsions.
- Weakness or numbness in arms/legs/face.
- Mood changes.
- Other neurologic or medical concerns.



Take Your Concussion Seriously:

If you or your gymnast suspect a concussion has occurred, stop your participation in the practice/competition, and seek medical treatment. If you do NOT seek Medical treatment and continue to participate with signs/symptoms of your concussion there are potential complications which include, but are not limited to, Second Impact Syndrome, Post concussion Syndrome, Intracranial Hemorrhage, or CTE (chronic traumatic Encephalopathy).

Did You Know?

It may take up to 7 days for concussion symptoms to present themselves. Symptoms can increase with cognitive, physical, or emotional triggers. For this reason, it is important to follow up with a physician (Medical Doctor) or qualified concussion specialist within two weeks after a concussion has been diagnosed.

Each concussion is unique – each person may experience different symptoms, triggers, and timelines for recovery. Your concussion requires an individualized treatment approach and proper medical follow-up based on your specific symptoms.

Recovery Process

While rest in the first 24-48 hours following a concussion may be beneficial, prolonged rest has NOT been found to improve concussion recovery and may even delay recovery. After an initial period of rest, it is essential to resume a normal daily routine with regular sleeping habits to help your brain and body recover. Concussion symptoms increase when the brain is overstimulated by physical, cognitive (thinking) activities or in specific social settings/environments (bright lights, loud noise, or crowds). While some patients find screens (TV, computer, cell phone) or reading increases their symptoms, others may tolerate these activities. Reducing time spent on devices/stimuli to keep symptom levels low may be recommended.

Students should have regular medical follow-ups after a concussion to monitor recovery and aid with the process of returning to school. While students may be absent from school in the first days following a concussion, prolonged absence from school is not recommended. If a student does need more support and accommodations for school following

a concussion, your Medical Provider may refer you to a multidisciplinary concussion clinic with experience in individualized learning plans.

Return to Activity

Children and adolescents should NOT return to sports/competition UNTIL they have successfully returned to school (and have received medical clearance to start progressing in exercise), however early introduction of reduced physical activity is appropriate.

A gradual, stepwise return to cognitive and physical activity is the best practice following a concussion. This process is individualized, guided by your symptoms (low to no symptoms), and supervised by your Medical Team. Written clearance documentation will be required from a Medical Provider (this depends on your State on who can provide this note) before you return to a sport or activity that carries a risk of contact/possible head injury.

The average concussion may last approximately 10-14 days in adults and up to 4 weeks in children and adolescents. If symptoms persist beyond this, a Medical Provider with experience in concussion management together with a multidisciplinary concussion clinic is recommended.

When seeking care, ensure the clinic you choose offers:

- Direct access to and continued involvement of a Medical Provider with experience in concussion management.
- A network or interdisciplinary team of three or more different, regulated health care providers.
- A clinic that can provide a full spectrum of concussion care from early management to a prolonged course for individuals with persistent symptoms when needed.

Please see [USAG Concussion Information](#)