

Concussion Return to Learn (RTL) Protocol

Instructions:

- Keep brain activity below the level that causes worsening of symptoms (headache, tiredness, irritability etc....)
- If symptoms worsen at any stage, stop activity and rest.
- Seek further medical attention if you continue with symptoms beyond 7 days.
- People who give appropriate time to ensure complete brain rest before returning to cognitive/brain activity may have better outcomes than who rush through these guidelines.
- Please give this form to your teacher/school administrators to help them understand your recovery.

Stage	Home Activity	School Activity	Physical Activity
Brain Rest	Rest in a dark, quiet place. Sleep and nap as much as needed. Drink plenty of fluids and eat healthy foods every 3-4 hours. Avoid "screen time" (text, computer, cell phone, TV, video games).	No school. No homework or take-home tests. Avoid reading and studying.	Walking short distances to get around is okay. No exercise of any kind. No driving.
This step usually ends 3-5 days after injury. Progress to the next stage when your child starts to improve, but s/he still may still have symptoms.			
Restful Home Activity	Set a regular bedtime/wake up schedule. Allow at least 8-10 hours of sleep and naps if needed. Drink lots of fluids and eat healthy foods every 3-4 hours. Limit "screen time" to less than 30 minutes a day.	No school. May begin easy tasks at home (drawing, baking, cooking). Soft music and 'books on tape' ok. Once your child can complete 60-90 minutes of brain activity without a worsening of symptoms he/she may go to the next step.	Light physical activity, like walking. No strenuous physical activity or contact sports. No driving.
This step usually ends 3-5 days after injury. Progress to the next stage when your child starts to improve and s/he has fewer symptoms.			
Return to School – Partial Day	Allow 8-10 hours of sleep per night. Avoid napping. "Screen time" less than 1 hour a day. Drink lots of fluids and eat healthy foods every 3-4 hours. Spend limited social time with friends outside of school.	Gradually return to school. Start with a few hours/half-day. Take breaks in the nurse's office every 2 hours or as needed. Avoid loud areas (music, band, choir, shop, locker room, cafeteria, loud hallway and gym). Use sunglasses/ earplugs as needed. Sit in front of class. Use preprinted large font (18) class notes. Complete necessary assignments only. No tests or quizzes. Limit homework time. Multiple choice or verbal assignments better than lots of long writing. Tutoring or help as needed.	Light physical activity, like walking. No strenuous physical activity or contact sports. No driving.
This step usually ends 5-21 days after injury. If no symptoms, your child can attend full days of school.			
Return to School- Full Day	Allow 8-10 hours of sleep per night. Avoid napping. "Screen time" less than 1 hour a day. Drink lots of fluids and eat healthy foods every 3-4 hours. Spend limited social time with friends outside of school.	Progress to attending core classes for full days of school. Add in electives when tolerated. No more than 1 test or quiz per day. Give extra time or untimed homework/tests. Stop work if symptoms increase. Tutoring or help as needed.	Light physical activity, like walking. No strenuous physical activity or contact sports. No driving.
This step usually ends 5-21 days after injury. If no symptoms, your child can attend full days of school.			
Full Recovery	Return to normal home and social activities.	Return to normal school schedule and course load.	May begin and must complete the CIF Return to Play (RTP) Protocol before returning to strenuous physical activity or contact sports.
This step usually ends 5-21 days after injury. If no symptoms, your child can attend full days of school.			

**Guidelines adapted from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Return to Learn Protocol