

## **Graduated return to play following concussion – child**

### **Graduated Return to Play (G RTP) following concussion in a Child**

Your child has sustained a concussion (a minor form of head injury). S/he has been assessed and it is safe for them to go home with you.

Following a concussion, it is important not to return to sports too quickly. Returning, before the brain has fully recovered, can lead to further injuries and long-term health issues. This is because children and adolescents are more susceptible to concussion and so can take longer to recover.

#### **Why G RTP?**

Concussion must be taken seriously to protect the short and long-term health of your child. The purpose of G RTP is to allow adequate time for the brain to recover following a head injury. One important part of this is to have a realistic expectation of the recovery time as well as knowing how your child might be feeling.

#### **Symptoms of concussion**

Symptoms of concussion typically become evident in the first 48 hours after a head injury and include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ♦ Headaches                               | ♦ Restlessness                              |
| ♦ Feelings of dizziness                   | ♦ Fatigue                                   |
| ♦ Nausea/vomiting                         | ♦ Difficulties with concentration           |
| ♦ Memory problems                         | ♦ Visual problem                            |
| ♦ Sleep disturbance                       | ♦ Irritability                              |
| ♦ Impulsiveness and self-control problems | ♦ Feeling depressed, tearful or             |
| anxious                                   |   |
| ♦ Sensitivity to light or noise           | ♦ Difficulties thinking and problem-solving |

#### **What are the risks/side effects/ potential complications of not completing G RTP?**

- Prolonged concussion symptoms
- Increased risk of developing concussion symptoms
- Risk of further head injury
- Increased risk of other injuries

## Resting

In teenagers / children a minimum of 24 hours of complete physical and cognitive (thinking activities) rest is advised as the brain needs time to rest and recover following a concussion.

<b>Physical activity your child should rest from completely for at least 24 hours</b>	<b>Brain activities your child should rest from completely for at least 24 hours</b>
Running, cycling, swimming, lifting weights	reading, watching television, computer and /or video games, using a smart phone

After this they should have a time of relative rest. This means they can start to do more activities, as long as it doesn't start new or worsen any symptoms. This should last for 13 days, making it 2 weeks in total.

## When can my child return to school/college?

- It is OK for your child to miss a day or two of school/college following a concussion if they are feeling unwell or if when they go back their symptoms return or worsen. Extended absence is rarely needed.
- It is important to have good communication with the school. Your child may need to have a phased return to school/college if there are worsening symptoms.
- If your child is due to be undertaking tests or exams, you should think about whether they should be delayed where possible until fully recovered. In some cases, symptoms may be prolonged, and this may impact your child's studies. If this is the case, early assessment by the GP and educational support is advised.
- Your child should have returned to school or full studies before restarting physical activities.

## When can my child return to sport?

After the 2-week rest period, they should have a GRTP programme before returning to active sports. The GRTP programme means that a player is introduced back to sport in a stepwise fashion. It is recommended that a medical practitioner or approved healthcare professional confirm that your child can take part in full contact training, so we will advise you to follow up with your GP/School. The link below gives an idea of what a GRTP programme is about.

If you have any concerns about your child's health, we advise you to follow up at your GP's practice or attend the Emergency Department at the Grange University Hospital. You could also call the number provided below to discuss any concerns.

## References

[https://www.faw.cymru/files/4215/4331/2848/FAW Concussion G.pdf](https://www.faw.cymru/files/4215/4331/2848/FAW_Concussion_G.pdf)  
Concussion Guidance | World Rugby  
Scottish sports concussion guidance (sportscotland.org.uk)  
World\_Rugby\_Concussion\_Guidance\_EN (1).pdf

**If you are at all concerned, please contact the relevant  
Emergency Department at the  
Grange University Hospital 01633 493287**

**"This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg".**