

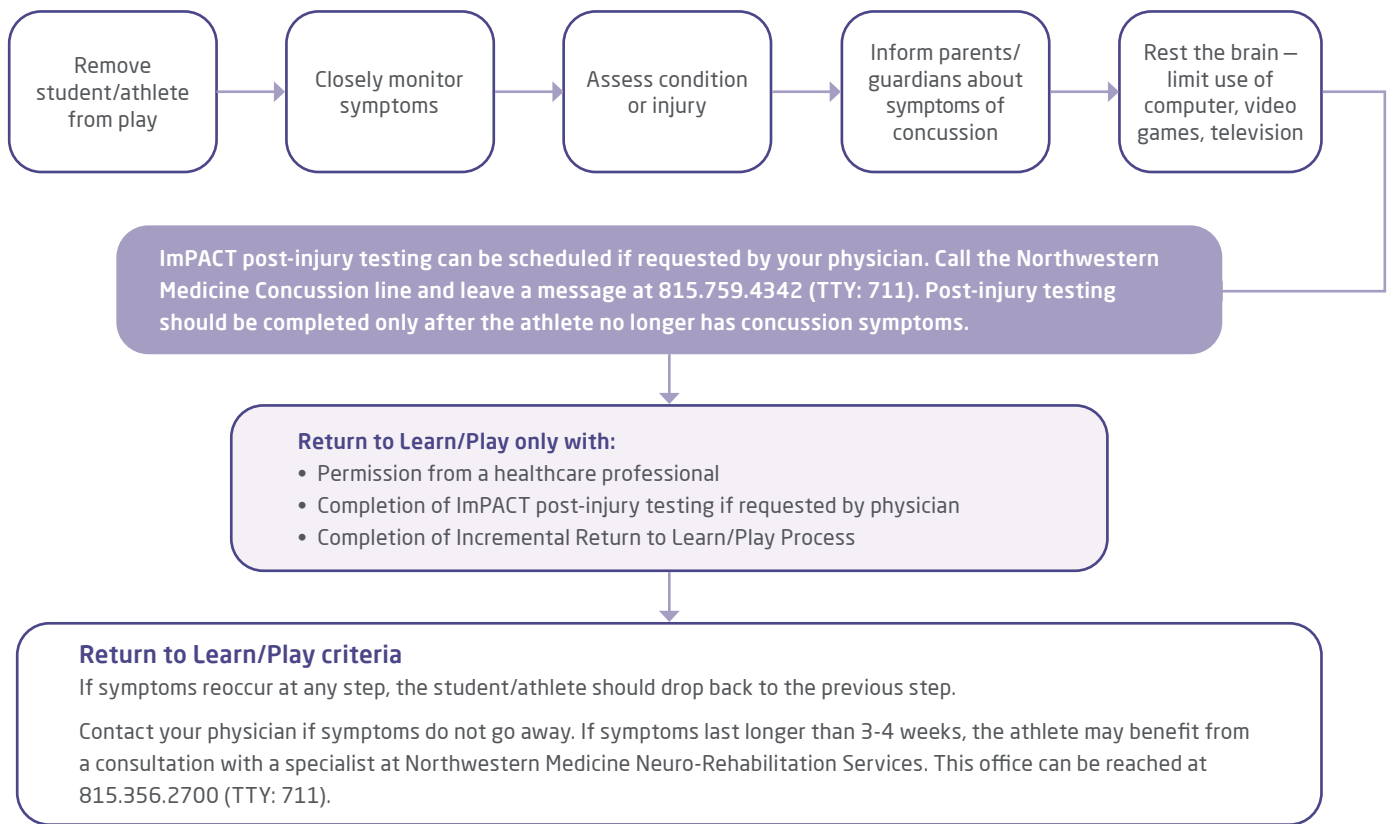
Symptoms of Concussion and How to Respond

Concussion is a mild brain injury that can be caused by a blow to the head or a sudden jolt that causes the brain to bump against your skull. Symptoms may appear immediately, or may not show up until days or weeks following injury. Cognitive and physical symptoms usually occur early, while emotional and sleep symptoms often occur later.

Early symptoms		Later symptoms	
Cognitive	Physical	Emotional	Sleep
Confusion	Headaches	Anxiety or sadness	Difficulty falling asleep
Disorientation	Dizziness	Anger	Wakes up at night
Memory problems	Nausea/vomiting	Agitation or irritability	More fatigued
Poor attention	Light sensitivity	Easily frustrated	
Poor concentration	Sound sensitivity	Impulsive	
Slow processing	Poor balance	Mood swings	
Poor planning	Vision changes	Social problems	
Poor problem-solving	Seizures	Personality changes	
Poor judgment		Poor judgment	

Proper care for concussions is important. Northwestern Medicine provides baseline and post-concussion testing per request by your physician. To schedule testing, please leave a message at 815.759.4342 (TTY: 711).

How to Respond to Concussion



Incremental Return to Learn/Play Process

RETURN TO LEARN

- Step 1:** Stay home and minimize academic/mental activity.
- Step 2:** Stay home and limit light academic/mental activity to 30 minutes a day.
- Step 3:** Return to school part-time with accommodations, and limit light academic/mental activity to 45 minutes a day.
- Step 4:** Return to school part-time with accommodations, and limit light academic/mental activity to 60 minutes a day.
- Step 5:** Return to school full-time with accommodations. No standardized testing.
- Step 6:** Full return to school with typical academic load.

RETURN TO PLAY

- Step 1:** Follow Return to Learn first. Rest until athlete no longer shows symptoms of concussion.
- Step 2:** Begin light aerobic exercises.
- Step 3:** Return to sport-specific training with moderate activity.
- Step 4:** Return to heavy non-contact activity.
- Step 5:** Participate in controlled practice and full-contact drills.
- Step 6:** Full return to play.



Orthopaedics

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