

DISCHARGE GUIDELINES FOR PEDIATRIC BRAIN INJURY

Symptoms that require immediate attention (go to your emergency room or call 911):

Loss of consciousness	Confusion	Headache that gets worse	Disorientation	Seizure
Vomiting	Agitation	Extreme lethargy	Extreme Irritability	

Common cognitive and behavioral symptoms:

Memory loss for the event	Increased need for sleep	Behavior and personality changes
Irritability	Poor Attention	Sensitivity to light & sound
Slowed thinking	Disorientation	Sensitivity to social stimulation
Trouble finding the right words	Moodiness	Disrupted Sleep
Short term memory problems (from day to day or hour to hour)		


A brain injury might worsen difficulties your child had before the injury.

Course of Recovery: You'll notice the most improvement in the first few months, but recovery from brain injury is a very slow process that occurs over several months. You'll notice more gradual improvement for up to one year. Severe brain injuries might require even more time to heal.

Who should I follow-up with?

- Every child should f/u with their pediatrician or primary physician within 2-3 days of leaving the hospital.
- In addition to going to your PCP, if any of the following apply, you should also follow-up with a concussion specialist (e.g., neurologist, neuropsychologist)
 - History of brain injury or concussion
 - Pre-existing neurologic event (e.g., seizures, brain bleed, brain tumor)
 - Pre-existing problems with learning, attention, behavior, or mood (e.g., learning disability, ADHD, depression, anxiety, etc.).
 - History of a developmental delay.

What can I do to help my child recover at home?

- Provide a low-stimulation environment. Limit TV and movies, no video games, limit homework, limit reading, etc. Gradually re-introduce these things in increments of 15 minutes as long as your child is symptom-free.
- Allow as much rest as your child needs.
- **B.R.A.I.N** 

What about returning to school?

- Take it slow. If your child has symptoms when they're at rest, they shouldn't go back to school.
- Start with ½-days, as tolerated. Your child should be permitted to rest at school.
- Gradually increase the amount of time they spend school, and if your child has symptoms, return to the level at which they had no symptoms.

What about returning to sports and other physical activity?

- Your child cannot participate in any activity until they have been medically cleared.
- Your child should be completely symptom-free before engaging in physical activities, sports, PE, riding a bike, skateboarding, etc.
- Once your child is symptom-free, gradually re-introduce physical activity. Your child will be sensitive to physical exertion. Limit the amount of time they participate and the level of intensity.
- Regardless of the amount of time or intensity of the activity, if your child experiences symptoms, they should stop immediately. Your child can try the activity at the level at which they experienced no symptoms with participation, once their symptoms have resolved.

B Be careful! Avoid further injury.

R Rest = Recovery. Keep it low and slow.

A Activities: return gradually.

I In progress: your child's brain is still developing

N Neurological Follow-Up. See your primary physician and maybe a neurologist or neuropsychologist.