

MYTH #1

You should not let an individual with a concussion sleep for extended periods of time.

The brain needs optimal, uninterrupted rest to recover. However, it is important to monitor signs and symptoms in the first 6 hours and watch for any red flags (e.g. severe/increasing headache, vomiting, agitation, etc.). If no red flags present, and symptoms stabilize, then the individual should be resting especially in the first two days following a concussion. After the first 48 hours post-injury, returning to a "normal" sleep pattern is recommended. The individual should avoid frequent napping to keep on schedule.



MYTH #2

A dark room with absolutely no stimuli whatsoever is the ideal environment for someone with a concussion.

For the first day or two, an individual should have complete cognitive and physical rest to let their symptoms stabilize. However, beyond this time the patient should begin the process of getting back to normal daily life and activity as long as these activities are subthreshold, meaning not bringing on new symptoms or making current symptoms worse. The individual should also maintain social interaction by staying in contact with close friends and family members, especially if they are left alone.



MYTH #3

All pain remedies and medication should be avoided if you have a concussion.

An individual should never take pain medication to mask the symptoms of a concussion without first speaking to your physician or other primary care provider. However, pharmacology can be useful in the treatment of certain concussion symptoms. But these recommendations must be prescribed by a physician.



MYTH #4

Concussive injuries only occur in the moment of impact, therefore the symptoms will show up immediately.

A concussion is a microscopic injury and it may take a few minutes or many hours for the signs or symptoms to appear. The literature shows that it may take up to 24 hours for symptoms to appear. These symptoms may also change over the first day or two. While the brain is recovering from injury, and symptoms are present, the brain is more susceptible to injury. This is why it is important to sit out and follow the management plan provided by an experienced health-care provider.



COMMON CONCUSSION MYTHS DEBUNKED

MYTH #5

Children will bounce back quicker from a concussion than adults.

Some studies have shown that children actually take much longer to recover than older adults perhaps due in part to the fact that their brain is less developed. No matter the age, it is important for all concussed individuals to follow a graduated Return-to-Learn/Work strategy, followed by a graduated Return-to-Play strategy.



MYTH #6

Athletes should be strong and tough and return to sports promptly following a concussion.

No individual experiencing concussion signs or symptoms should return to their sport. Early return can potentially lead to long-term symptoms or even more serious conditions (e.g. second impact syndrome). If an individual experiences ongoing concussive signs or symptoms, then they should seek out different types of therapy according to the specific symptoms they are experiencing. Consult an experienced health care provider to learn more about potential treatment options to explore.



MYTH #7

Physical activity should not be allowed, until an individual is completely symptom free.

For the first 24-48 hours post injury, an individual must avoid all cognitive and physical activities until their symptoms stabilize. After this time period, an individual can begin subthreshold activities even if they are still experiencing signs or symptoms. **Activities such as light walking should be encouraged as long as it does not bring on new symptoms or make existing symptoms worse.** This does not mean that an individual can return to their sport yet, but they are able to complete light subthreshold cognitive and physical activities. Individuals should keep record of their activities and how they felt in a symptom reporting journal.

