



Concussion FAQs for Educators

I am an educator. Why should concussions matter to me?

Concussions are a brain injury. A brain injury is the only type of injury that directly effects learning. Most students who experience a concussion recover within 2 to 4 weeks. Some concussion symptoms linger and have the potential to cause long-term academic and social difficulties for the student. Management through academic accommodation can help with the student's recovery.

Common Concussion Symptoms

Some symptoms can have a significant impact on classroom learning and schoolwork.

- **Physical symptoms** may interfere with the student's ability to focus and concentrate
- **Cognitive symptoms** may impact the ability of the student to learn, memorize and process information, as well as keep track of assignments and tests. Struggles with school work may lead to frustration, nervousness and/or irritability
- Behavioural symptoms may interfere with student's ability to interact with peers/staff.

What are some things to look for when a student returns to school after a concussion?

- Increased problems paying attention or concentrating
- Increased problems remembering or learning new information
- Longer time needed to complete tasks or assignments
- Difficulty organizing tasks
- Inappropriate or impulsive behavior during class
- Greater irritability
- Less ability to cope with stress or more emotional

How are concussions managed by health professionals?

No two concussions are exactly the same, so individualized assessment and management is necessary.

Will a healthcare professional treating a student with a concussion send a note to school with specific academic accommodations?

- The contents of a note you receive may differ amongst providers.
- Some will give detailed descriptions of academic accommodations which can be easily followed.
- Others may provide little or no details about the concussion. If you do not receive any direction, teachers should still help to determine if the student needs academic assistance, and if so, in what form. The concussion management lead will help coordinate the student plan by communicating with the student, family, teachers and healthcare provider, if appropriate.

Is there school insurance to pay for treatment of concussions by healthcare professionals other than a physician or nurse practitioner?

The only insurance, other than family private coverage, would be through the New Brunswick Athletic Association (NBIAA) sport for high school sports. High school hockey is different and the coverage through Hockey Canada.



How can I help students who are recovering from a concussion?

Making short-term changes to the students' school work load and schedule can assist their brain healing and help them get back to their regular school routine. The concussion management lead at your school will provide you with information and guidance specific to each student.

Who will communicate with the student/family and healthcare provider to determine plans for school and activity?

The concussion management lead at your school will communicate with the student, their parents/guardians and healthcare professional to determine the plan for school and activity.

Concussion symptoms may return as students get back to cognitive and physical activities. It is important if you notice any worsening symptoms (such as headaches, a hard time concentrating, and/or nausea) to notify the concussion management lead.

Are there any general tips that may help students get back into their regular school routine?

- A graduated return to school may be helpful depending on how the student's symptoms. .
- Noisy and over-stimulating environments may make their symptoms worse. The student may need to leave class early to avoid crowds and noise.
- More time for tests or assignments or rescheduling of testing.
- Rest periods during the day, if necessary.

Thinking/Remembering (e.g., difficulty thinking clearly or concentrating, feeling slowed down)

- Reduce class assignments and homework to key tasks only and base grades on adjusted work.
- Provide extra time to work on class assignments.
- Provide written instructions and help for homework and classwork.
- Allow extra time to take tests, limit tests to one per day, and/or provide study guides.
- Allow students to show they understand a concept orally instead of in writing.
- Provide class notes and/or allow students to use a computer or tape recorder to record classroom information.

Fatigue/Sleep and Physical (e.g., feeling tired, having no energy, having headaches or dizziness)

- Allow rest breaks.
- Allow extra time to go from class to class, to avoid crowds.
- If bothered by light, allow the student to wear sunglasses or sit in a place that is less bright
- If bothered by noise, provide a quiet place to study, take a test, or have a break.
- Do not substitute concentration activities for physical activity (e.g., do not assign reading instead of physical education).

Emotional (e.g., feeling sad, irritable, anxious)

- Develop an emotional support plan (i.e. identify an adult to whom they can talk if feeling overwhelmed).
- Locate a quiet place for them to go to if they feel overwhelmed.
- Students may benefit from continued involvement in certain extracurricular activities during their recovery. Discussion with the student and the concussion management lead about how to balance school work and other activities.