

# Sports Medicine



## Concussion Clinic FAQs for Primary Care Physicians

- **What is the youngest age a patient can be seen in Concussion Clinic?**
  - In general, our concussion clinic is limited to patients at least 10 years of age who were injured participating in sport or are looking to return to sports. Patients younger than 10 years old, or those who are not looking to return to sports should be referred to Physical Medicine at 614-722-5050.
- **When should I refer a patient to Concussion Clinic?**
  - Any time you feel uncomfortable with management of care
  - Severe or prolonged symptoms exist, or you feel they have a need for further specialized services
  - Risk factors present for a prolonged course
  - History of multiple concussions
    - Need for a discussion about retirement or a substantial break from contact sports
    - Don't want to be the "bad guy" regarding the risk factors related to multiple concussions
  - Parental concern about "concussion testing"
  - Dishonest patient/family regarding symptoms
  - Not enough time for thorough evaluation in your office
  - **A patient suffering from an acute concussion that rapidly deteriorates should be sent to the Emergency Department for further work-up, including imaging.**
- **When I call Sports Medicine to refer a patient, many times they cannot be scheduled for 5-7 days. Is this an acceptable time frame to have the patient wait to be seen?**
  - Yes. While we make every effort to schedule new patients as quickly as possible, there are a few times during the year when we are booked out 5-7 days, namely the fall high school sports season. There are a few things you can advise the family to do in the meantime to give their symptoms the best chance to decrease during this time:
    - Mental rest. This is a concussion patient's best ally. Avoiding screen time, such as computers and texting, avoiding the use of headphones/earbuds, and severely limiting television time can go a long way in decreasing symptoms.

## Sports Medicine

- Encourage the patient to keep a symptom log every day and bring it with them to their appointment. The patient should document symptoms around the same time each day. This is valuable information for the sports medicine staff, as it allows them to see the progression of symptoms from the time of injury to the time of appointment.
  - Remind the patient and family that absolutely no physical activity should be permitted until seen in Concussion Clinic. This includes organized games and practices, physical education class, recess, and rough housing in the backyard with friends.
- **I have a patient who was diagnosed in the ED/UC with a concussion. The family was told the child should not return to school until seen in Sports Medicine, but that appointment is not for 7 days. What is a feasible way for the child to return to school before their appointment?**
    - This is ultimately up to you, the child and the family, but often a child is ok to return to school with a few lifestyle modifications if his/her symptoms are mild.
      - Suggesting half days for a few days to see how the patient tolerates school can be helpful. If the patient's symptoms do not increase with half days, advancing to a full day of school is acceptable.
      - Recommend the patient avoid the cafeteria during lunchtime and eat lunch in a quiet place. Many times, the increased noise from the lunch crowd can cause an increase in symptoms.
      - Recommend the patient avoid band/music class
      - Direct the patient to spend recess or PE class in a quiet place.
      - If symptoms do begin to increase throughout the day at any point, the patient should be permitted to go to a quiet place and rest until symptoms subside.
      - In the event the child is unable to attend full days of school, advising the parent to return them to half days is acceptable.
      - Encourage to family to contact the school nurse or guidance counselor to inform them about the current situation and make sure all teachers are aware the child has suffered a concussion. We created two brochures—"A School Administrator's Guide to Concussion Management" and "An Educator's Guide to Concussions in the Classroom"—to help school administrators and teachers be aware of concussions and how they affect students in the classroom. Both brochures and more concussion resources are available at [NationwideChildrens.org/Concussions](http://NationwideChildrens.org/Concussions)
    - The physicians in Concussion Clinic can help the patient and family determine if further academic accommodations or academic testing are necessary.

### How do I refer to the Sports Medicine Concussion Clinic?

- Call (614) 722-6200 or toll-free 1 (877) 722-6200
- Fax (614) 722-4000
- Online at [NationwideChildrens.org/Sports-Medicine](http://NationwideChildrens.org/Sports-Medicine)