

How to use the Concussion Action Plan

All patients following a diagnosis of a typical acute concussion should be given a Concussion Action Plan (CAP).

An atypical concussion includes patients:

1. Requiring hospital admission for further investigation (who may be eligible post-discharge as determined by the treating clinician).
2. With significant pre-injury neurological or mental health co-morbidities.
3. Presenting with post-concussion symptoms of several weeks duration of post-concussion syndrome.

1. Red zone or zone of rest (typical duration 1–2 days)

The patient experiences acute symptoms that, because of their severity, significantly limit both cognitive and physical activities. This is the best time to set expectations for recovery. Symptomatic use of medications is reasonable in this phase.

A box outlining concussion symptoms and the criteria for seeking medical attention following discharge is included, and should be brought to the parent and/ or patient's attention.

2. Orange zone or zone of relative rest (typical duration days 3–5)

The patient is still symptomatic, but not to the degree that consistently limits his or her participation in routine activities. At this time, the patient should begin gentle cognitive and physical activity. During this phase, the use of medications for the control of concussion symptoms should begin to be tapered and then limited.

Note: a symptom log sheet is included and may assist with progression from the red to the orange zone.

Before commencement of the yellow zone, all patients should have formal follow-up assessment by a clinician.

3. Yellow zone or zone of returning to activity post injury

The patient no longer experiences the signs or symptoms of concussion after returning to routine levels of activity. During this phase, the patient progresses towards an increase in physical exertion and activity intensity. This is done to move the symptom threshold down in response to activity, thus developing symptom tolerance.

4. Green zone or zone of pre-injury activity

The patient should begin returning to the pre-injury activity levels.

Upon completion of step 4 of the green zone, all patients should be evaluated by a clinician to determine if they are ready to resume usual activity. Once cleared, usual activity may be commenced with restrictions for contact and collision activity in place for an additional 14 days.

For any questions please contact The Children's Hospital at Westmead Institute of Sports Medicine on **(02) 9845 0761** during normal working hours.