



The 4 “S’s” of Concussion Recovery

After you are “cleared” from your concussion, you, your family, coach and teammates can help monitor your continued brain recovery.

wellbodyKC asks about the 4 “S’s” – the 4 “S’s” are important right after you are “cleared to return to sport”- but also in the weeks, months, even years after your concussion took place. If you notice (or someone tells you they notice) a change in one of the “S” categories in your life- seek help from a health care provider knowledgeable in Concussion Management.

SLEEP: Concussion commonly alters sleep. But some people have ongoing sleep issues, even a month or more after their injury. Sleep can affect your next day’s alertness, mental success, and activity capacity. Returning to your sleep baseline is important for overall success and safety in your life. If you aren’t sleeping well, talk to a health care professional about healthy sleep hygiene.

SCHOOL: Concussion can alter school performance after the injury. Most student athletes get school accommodations that allow missing classes and making up missed work. Sometimes, a concussion affects school performance beyond the typical time for a concussion to resolve- usually a month or so. Examples include attention, focus, completing tasks, and memory issues including attention deficit disorder. Your grades months after a concussion should be similar to the grades you received prior to the injury. If your grades are suffering, talk to a school counselor and/or health care professional.

SAD (personality): Personality is an important factor for you, your family, and your friends to monitor in the coming weeks, months, and years after a concussion. The NFL as well as numerous medical institutions have explained cases of athletes (some with CTE) that had personality changes after one or multiple head injuries. These changes could include depression, anxiety, anger, or suicidal thoughts/actions. It may seem during your concussion recovery, the main goal was to get rid of physical issues caused by the injury (such as headache, dizziness, balance trouble, or light sensitivity) – but your personality and emotional health is equally as important. If you feel a change in your personality- don’t wait, contact a health care professional to learn how you can start feeling better.

SPORT (activity): Most athletes return to their activity baseline within a month or so after their injury. If you are having headaches, dizziness, balance trouble, light sensitivity, or other symptoms during sport or daily activity- this could be a sign that your brain is still healing or needs a treatment. Don’t ignore symptoms- the goal is having you feel the way you did before your concussion.

Every concussion is different- so is every athlete’s healing and recovery. If you aren’t back to baseline with your “S’s”- discuss with a health care provider knowledgeable in concussion what steps can be taken to get you feeling better- the “S” everyone wants you to be is “SPECTACULAR”!

Be well.

