

Home Observation Instructions for Caregivers of Concussed Middlebury College Students

Patients with a concussion should see a physician and be observed for the first 24-hours by a caregiver. Please share this plan with the physician and follow any additional physician recommendations. If you will not be able to reliably observe this patient, notify a healthcare provider. Do not accept this responsibility if you are or will be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during the observation period, or have a medical condition or other reason that will prevent you from performing this duty.

What to do:

1. Observe the patient every 4 to 6 hours for the 24 hours following a head injury. Set your alarm if necessary. It is important not to miss an observation.
2. During each observation, be sure that the person can:
 - a. **Open their eyes spontaneously** and does not require shaking or verbal encouragement to keep their eyes open.
 - b. **Tell you verbally who and where they are**, and do not appear confused.
 - c. **Perform a simple physical task without difficulty** (i.e.: Touch your finger to your nose)
3. **Call 911 if** the patient:
 - a. Has difficulty with any one of the three observations/ assessments.
 - b. Is complaining of worsening symptoms
 - c. Has a seizure, or is vomiting.
4. If the patient's symptoms are not getting worse and they can easily perform the 3 tasks during the observations, repeat the observation procedure at the next specified time interval.

It is not unusual for patients with concussions to experience mild headaches, nausea (without vomiting), problems concentrating or remembering, fatigue, decreased appetite, or problems sleeping. As long as these symptoms remain mild, there is no need for an emergency assessment. Other important points for this patient include:

- Rest your brain! No schoolwork or reading and only minimal screen-time (tv, computer, cell phone, etc)
- No alcohol, drugs, or sleeping medications
- Do not drive, workout, play sports, or do strenuous activity until medically cleared to do so
- Do not take ibuprofen, aspirin, or other anti-inflammatory medicines. Use acetaminophen per package instructions for mild pain symptoms.

If you are unsure or have questions, please call:

- Parton Center for Health and Wellness @ 802-443-5135
- Porter Hospital Emergency Room @ 802-388-4701