

# R.A.C.E. PROGRAM POST-CONCUSSION FOLLOW-UP CARE

- R** Review of course and symptoms
- A** Assessment and a brief neurobehavioral status exam to provide a snapshot and monitor cognitive symptoms
- C** Create a plan for return to school and activities
- E** Evaluation, as needed, 4-6 weeks post-concussion to assess unresolved symptoms

What exactly is the R.A.C.E. Program and how will it help us?

The R.A.C.E. program is a comprehensive program to help monitor symptoms of a concussion, provide education, and create a plan for return to school and/or activities. The program consists of two appointments.

The first appointment should be conducted as soon as possible after injury and consultation with the child's physician. On that day, information regarding the child/adolescent's background history will be collected and a brief cognitive assessment will be conducted. Based on this information, a plan for return to school and/or activities is created. A brief report that includes the nature of the injury and our recommendations is provided to parents and physicians to help facilitate treatment planning and communication with the school regarding the child/adolescent's needs.

The second appointment is scheduled on an as-needed basis. At that time, a follow-up evaluation is conducted to assess any unresolved symptoms. A comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation might be recommended at that time if any symptoms persist.

Why the R.A.C.E program?

Concussions are actually mild traumatic brain injuries (TBIs). Research has demonstrated the compounding negative impact of multiple concussions, especially if a second injury occurs before complete recovery from the initial incident. It is important to monitor cognitive symptoms and develop/implement a plan for return to school and/or play to minimize risk of subsequent injury and promote recovery. Our goal is to provide education and quality follow-up care for your child to facilitate healing.

**Want more information on how we can help in the recovery process?**

Contact the Dirksen Center  
by calling 847-357-9158.  
The R.A.C.E. Program is run by  
Drs. Dirksen and Serrato.

These evaluations are typically covered  
by most insurance companies.  
For more information, call the Dirksen Center or  
go to [www.dirksencenter.com](http://www.dirksencenter.com) to verify  
your insurance benefits.

Want more information about concussions?  
Visit [www.dirksencenter.com](http://www.dirksencenter.com)



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 **DIRKSEN CENTER**  
FOR NEUROBEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING • CLINICAL SERVICES • EDUCATIONAL MAPPING

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## CONCUSSIONS



## What is a concussion?

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI). A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a bump, hit, or blow to the head. It is considered “mild” because concussions are not generally life-threatening. Despite the fact that they are considered “mild,” symptoms of concussions might still cause a disruption to usual activities.

## What are some possible symptoms of a concussion?

Cognitive and behavioral symptoms following a concussion vary from quite mild to debilitating. Disorientation, slowed thinking, word finding problems, lethargy, persistent/worsening headaches, sensitivities to light/sound/olfactory input, dizziness, difficulty remembering new information, impulsivity, poor attention, and emotional changes are among the symptoms frequently reported after a concussion. Most individuals do not exhibit every symptom, though some will experience several of them. Factors that influence symptomatology include: the severity of the injury, history of prior concussions, whether there was a loss of consciousness, and if there were any pre-existing conditions such as Depression, Anxiety, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or a Learning Disorder. A brain injury might worsen difficulties your child had before the injury. If the child/adolescent has a history of prior concussions, the symptoms will likely be more prevalent and take longer to resolve.

# WHAT SHOULD YOU DO FOR YOUR CHILD AFTER A CONCUSSION?

## REMEMBER TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR B.R.A.I.N.!

### B - BE CAREFUL!

- A secondary injury can be devastating when it follows the initial injury, even if the initial injury is mild.
- The effects of a TBI (remember that a concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury) are cumulative. A secondary TBI, even years after the initial injury, will be worse than if the original TBI had not occurred.

### R - REST EQUALS RECOVERY.

- The brain requires REST more than anything else. There should be limited stimulation from activities, people, TV, homework, etc. Children may be noticeably more sensitive to the usual activity of the household.
- Sleep. Your child might need more sleep than typical, and/or may demonstrate difficulty falling or staying asleep.

### A - ACTIVITIES.

- There should be a gradual return to school and usual ACTIVITIES. It is almost never appropriate to return to school full-time immediately after a TBI.
- NO contact sports, PE, or other activities that increase the risk of subsequent injury (i.e. skateboarding, skiing, etc.).

### I - IN PROGRESS

- Always remember that children and adolescent’s brain development is IN PROGRESS.
- Be mindful that deficits may emerge much later based on the development of the brain and demands placed on the child as he or she develops.

### N - NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL FOLLOW-UP

- It is important to have a NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL FOLLOW-UP within 1 week to monitor cognitive status and establish educational accommodations. This can be done via the R.A.C.E. Program at the Dirksen Center.
- A comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation should be completed 4-6 weeks post injury to assess residual cognitive effects and adjust treatment and educational accommodations, if necessary.

## HOW LONG WILL RECOVERY TAKE?

Recovery varies from person to person. Some children experience symptoms that last as little as 1-2 days, while others experience symptoms for several weeks or longer. Each child and each concussion is different, and recovery is unique for each child. However, after multiple concussions, a rule of thumb is that recovery is prolonged in comparison to that of previous injuries.

