

## What Are Your Medical Instructions Now That You Have Been Diagnosed With a Concussion?

- You have already reported it and been checked out
  - Be honest with your providers (they are protecting you and your unit)
- Rest
  - Avoid exerting yourself physically (working, heavy lifting, exercising, etc.)
  - Avoid mental exertion (writing reports, thinking, activities requiring you to pay attention, etc.)
- Return to Duty
  - Expect to recover fully and RTD
  - Your provider will continue to evaluate you and will determine when it's safe for you to RTD

### \*Warning Signs

If you begin to experience any of the following, seek **immediate** medical attention:

- Worsening headache
- Worsening balance
- Double vision or other vision changes
- Decreasing level of alertness
- Increased disorientation
- Repeated vomiting
- Seizures
- Unusual behavior
- Amnesia/Memory problems

Additional Information:

**Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center**  
[www.DVBIC.org](http://www.DVBIC.org)

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Concussion/mTBI Information

## At the Time of Injury (In-Theater)



## What Happened to Me?

Your assessment indicates that you have had a concussion, which is also called a “mild traumatic brain injury” (mTBI)

## What Is a Concussion?

- A concussion is a head injury from a hit, blow, or jolt to the head that briefly knocks you out (loss of consciousness), or makes you feel confused or “see stars” (alteration or change in consciousness)
- Immediately or soon after the concussion, you may have disorientation, headaches, dizziness, balance difficulties, ringing in the ears, blurred vision, nausea, vomiting, irritability, temporary gaps in your memory, sleep problems, or attention and concentration problems

## How Long Does It Last?

- Most people recover from concussion
- Symptoms usually begin to improve within hours and typically resolve completely within days to weeks
- Even if you’ve had more than one concussion, full recovery is expected. However, every time you sustain an additional concussion your healing might take longer



## Recovery

- Recovery is different for each person and depends on the nature of the injury
- The most important thing you can **do** is to allow time for your brain to heal
- Be honest about your symptoms and let your medical provider decide when it’s time to return to duty (RTD)

## Why Does a Concussion Affect Return to Duty?

- Often after a concussion, service members think they are OK, yet they’ve actually had an injury that needs attention
- Symptoms after concussion reduce your effectiveness, which could impair your performance and endanger your mission
  - These temporary impairments resolve fastest when your brain gets rest (similar to resting a sprained ankle)
- If you get another concussion before healing from the first one, you are at greater risk for a more serious injury

## Healing From a Concussion

### Things That Improve Healing

- Maximize downtime/rest during the day
- Get plenty of sleep at night
- Protect yourself from another concussion: avoid contact sports, combatives, etc.
- Let others know that you’ve had a concussion so they can watch out for you
- Return immediately to your medical provider if you’re feeling worse or experiencing any of the warning signs\*

### Things That Impair Healing

- Another concussion before healing from the first one
- Alcohol and drug use
- Inadequate sleep (made worse by caffeine or “energy-enhancing” products)
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, and other over-the-counter pain medications unless instructed by your doctor
- Sleeping aids and sedatives unless instructed by your doctor