About Concussion
A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a fall or a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Doctors may describe a concussion as a “mild” brain injury because concussions are usually not life-threatening. Even so, their effects can be serious.

Concussion Signs and Symptoms
Most people with a concussion recover quickly and fully. But for some people, symptoms can last for days, weeks, or longer. In general, recovery may be slower among older adults, young children, and teens. Those who have had a concussion in the past may be at risk of having another one and may find that it takes longer to recover if they have another concussion. Symptoms of concussion usually fall into four categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking/Remembering</th>
<th>Difficulty thinking clearly</th>
<th>Feeling slowed down</th>
<th>Difficulty concentrating</th>
<th>Difficulty remembering new information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Nausea or vomiting (early on)</td>
<td>Sensitivity to noise or light</td>
<td>Feeling tired, having no energy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fuzzy or blurry vision</td>
<td>Dizziness</td>
<td>Balance problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional/Mood</td>
<td>Irritability</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>More emotional</td>
<td>Nervousness or anxiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Sleeping more than usual</td>
<td>Sleep less than usual</td>
<td>Trouble falling asleep</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Getting Better
Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. Ignoring your symptoms and trying to “tough it out” often makes symptoms worse. Be patient because healing takes time. Only when your symptoms have reduced significantly, in consultation with your health care provider, should you slowly and gradually return to your daily activities, such as work or school. If your symptoms come back or you get new symptoms as you become more active, this is a sign that you are pushing yourself too hard. Stop these activities and take more time to rest and recover. As the days go by, you can expect to gradually feel better.

Tips to help you get better:
- Get plenty of sleep at night, and rest during the day.
- Avoid activities that are physically demanding (e.g., sports, heavy housecleaning, working-out) or require a lot of concentration (e.g., sustained computer use, video games).
- Ask your doctor when you can safely drive a car, ride a bike, or operate heavy equipment.
- Do not drink alcohol. Alcohol and other drugs may slow your recovery and put you at risk of further injury.

There are many people who can help you and your family as you recover from a concussion. You do not have to do it alone. Keep talking with your doctor, family members, and loved ones about how you are feeling, both physically and emotionally. If you do not think you are getting better, tell your doctor.

If you have questions, please contact the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation team: (603) 650-8022

DHMC also offers a Sports Concussion Program if you would like baseline testing or treatment following a suspected sports concussion: (603) 650-8867, concussion@hitchcock.org

Content provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
More information can also be found at www.cdc.gov/concussion.