Anxiety and worry after a concussion

Why this matters

After a concussion, it's common to feel **anxious, stressed, or "not yourself."**

- The brain controls both **thinking** and **emotions** — so when it's healing, your mood can be affected.
- Not knowing exactly *when* you'll feel normal again can add to the worry.
- Anxiety itself can make symptoms worse (more headaches, poor sleep, trouble concentrating).

The important thing to know: **this is normal, and it gets better.**

Why anxiety happens after a concussion

Symptoms feel strange - foggy thinking, dizziness, headaches
Worry about school/sport - "When will I be back?" "Will I miss out?"
Loss of control - being told to rest can feel frustrating.
Brain chemistry shifts - concussion can temporarily change how your body handles stress.

Coping strategies that can help

1. Talk about it

- Share worries with parents, friends, teachers, or a doctor.
- Don't bottle it up — anxiety feels lighter when it's shared.

2. Breathe and reset

- Try slow, deep breathing: in through your nose, out through your mouth.
- Even 2 minutes can calm racing thoughts and help symptoms.

3. Stay connected

- Keep in touch with friends — even if you're resting, short chats or messages help you feel included.

4. Do small, positive things daily

- Walk outside, listen to music, stretch, draw, or meditate.
- Recovery is about steady progress, not rushing back.

5. Balance screens and rest

- Too much screen time can worsen symptoms, but total isolation can make anxiety worse.
- Use screens in short, symptom-free bursts.

When to seek help

Most anxiety after concussion improves as your brain heals. But talk to a doctor if you notice:

- Anxiety that's getting worse, not better.
- Trouble sleeping every night.
- Feeling low, hopeless, or not wanting to do things you usually enjoy.
- Panic attacks or feeling constantly on edge.

Key Points

- Anxiety is normal after concussion - it doesn't mean something is wrong with you.
- It's part of how your brain and emotions recover together.
- Talking, breathing, and staying connected all help.
- Most people improve quickly, but ask for help early if you're struggling.