

# Getting active soon after concussion may aid kids' recovery

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(HealthDay)—A return to non-contact physical activity three days after a

concussion is safe and possibly even beneficial for kids, a Canadian clinical trial finds.

"Gone are the days of resting in a dark room," said study co-author Andrée-Anne Ledoux, a scientist at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute in Ottawa, Canada.

The [new study](#) included 456 patients aged 10 to 17 who had concussions. One group rested until they had no more symptoms; the other resumed physical activity 72 hours after their [concussion](#). The two groups completed surveys about their symptoms.

Two weeks after their [concussion](#), both groups had similar symptoms, indicating that an early return to physical activity was not harmful, the study authors said.

But the investigators also found that participants who resumed activity 72 hours after their concussion had greater improvement in symptoms and a lower rate of delayed recovery than those who rested until they were [symptom](#)-free.

The authors of the study, which was published recently in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, said this is the first and largest real-world, randomized clinical trial in this age group. They noted that previous studies have been smaller, conducted in the lab, or involved only athletes.

"The findings of this study should give every health care professional who manages kids with [concussions](#) the confidence to prescribe early and controlled return to physical activity, even if they have symptoms," Ledoux said in a University of Ottawa news release.

"The study confirms that early return to physical activity is safe, can

reduce concussion symptoms and reduces the rate of delayed recovery," she added.

Based on their findings, the researchers suggested guidelines for gradually re-introducing physical activity into young people's daily routine.

After 72 hours, the patient should begin doing 15 minutes of moderate walking, the guidelines suggest. If symptoms are tolerable, he or she should increase their activity the next day, shifting, for example, to light jogging, according to the study authors.

If symptoms are not tolerable during or after physical activity, the patient should return to the last well-tolerated level of [physical activity](#) and try to increase it again after 24 hours, the guidelines suggest.

Patients must be given the [green light](#) by their primary care provider before returning to contact sports, Ledoux and colleagues said.

**More information:** The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on [concussion](#).

Andrée-Anne Ledoux et al, Is early activity resumption after paediatric concussion safe and does it reduce symptom burden at 2 weeks post injury? The Pediatric Concussion Assessment of Rest and Exertion (PedCARE) multicentre randomised clinical trial, *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (2021). [DOI: 10.1136/bjsports-2021-105030](https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2021-105030)

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