

Occupational Therapy After a Brain Injury

The nurse practitioners in the neurotrauma clinic will let you know when you are ready to return to cognitive and daily activities. At that time, they might refer you to occupational therapy services.

Why am I being referred for occupational therapy (OT)?

Our occupational therapists will help you participate in day-to-day life. We focus on your everyday activities that involve school/work/community life skills, vision, sensory processing, cognitive skills, hand use and upper extremity strength. Our occupational therapists can help you work on any of these areas. Participation and returning to everyday activities play an important role in your social development and strongly influence long-term mental and physical health.¹

How does occupational therapy help me after a brain injury?

After a brain injury you'll likely have changes with your day-to-day life as you heal. Sometimes, skills and abilities return on their own. Other times, you might need some help. Occupational therapists can help you work with areas that continue to be difficult. We'll provide you with ideas on how you can strengthen skills and make changes to your environment. Our goal is to help you return to school/work and recreational activities and be independent.

What can I expect at my occupational therapy evaluation?

Our occupational therapists will look at your:

- Vision and how it can affect school performance or daily activities
- Hand-eye coordination
- Task-based problem solving
- Memory and attention as they relate to independence with activities at school, at home and in the community
- Awareness of your abilities and need for help
- Sensitivities to sight, sound, touch and/or movement

If any of these areas cause problems for you, we'll suggest exercises or activities to complete at home. We'll also suggest changes in your daily routine to help you get through the day. We also might ask caregivers to provide more information about any changes in your behavior related to these daily activities.

Occupational Therapy at Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare has begun to adopt a Return to Function Protocol for post-concussion management. Depending on your child's age, he/she will progress through a series of four stages with a focus on the following areas: Vision/Vestibular, Mind Body (sleep hygiene, headaches, general coping, stress or other symptoms), Activities of Daily Living/Instrumental Activities of Daily Living, and cognition (as it relates to everyday function).

Your child will progress through a series of assessments and related therapy activities to help improve their functional performance in the areas listed above. Your child may be "fast-tracked" to a higher stage based on their evaluation results or performance during treatment sessions. Your therapist will keep you informed about the Stage that your child is at, the Targeted Skills your child should be acquiring by the end of a stage, and what supports you can be providing as parent(s)/caregiver(s) to help your child progress to the next stage of function.

Your occupational therapy evaluation will last about 45 minutes. [If you wear glasses, please bring them with you.](#)

Will I have ongoing occupational therapy appointments?

After your evaluation, you and your occupational therapist will decide if you need to schedule more visits to meet your rehabilitation needs.

When will I be done with occupational therapy?

Your occupational therapist will work closely with you, your school and your medical team. If your goals have been achieved or we determine that you no longer need the services, you will be done with occupational therapy.

1 Law M et al. Participation of children with physical disabilities: relationships with diagnosis, physical function, and demographic variables. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy* 2004;11(4):156-162.

[Make An Appointment 651-290-8707](#) [Refer a Patient 651-325-2200](#)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](#).