

KNOW YOUR CONCUSSION ABCs

Assess the situation Be alert for signs and symptoms Contact a health care professional



A Fact Sheet for Parents

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head and can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious.

Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be addressed correctly.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after an injury or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury. It is important to watch for changes in how your child or teen is acting or feeling, if symptoms are getting worse, or if s/he just "doesn't feel right." Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

If your child or teen reports **one or more** of the symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away. Children and teens are among those at greatest risk for concussion.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GURADIANS

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about events
- Answers questions slowly
- Repeats questions
- Can't recall events prior to the hit, bump, or fall
- Can't recall events after the hit, bump, or fall
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Forgets class schedule or assignments

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD

Thinking/Remembering:

- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Feeling more slowed down
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy

Physical:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Does not "feel right"

Emotional:

- Irritable
- Sad
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous

Sleep*:

- Drowsy
- Sleeps less than usual
- Sleeps more than usual
- Has trouble falling asleep

*Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.

To download this fact sheet in Spanish, please visit: www.cdc.gov/Concussion. Para obtener una copia electrónica de esta hoja de información en español, por favor visite: www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

DANGER SIGNS

Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. Your child or teen should be seen in an emergency department right away if s/he has:

- One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other
- Difficult to arouse
- Severe headache or worsening headache
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

Children and teens with a concussion should NEVER return to sports or recreation activities on the same day the injury occurred. They should delay returning to their activities until a health care provider experienced in evaluating for concussion says they are symptom-free and provide written clearance to return to activity. This means, until permitted, not returning to:

- Physical Education (PE) class,
- Sports practices or games, or
- Physical activity at recess.

What should I do if my child or teen has a concussion?

1. Seek medical attention. A health care provider experienced in evaluating for concussions can direct concussion management and review when it is safe for your child to return to normal activities, including school (concentration and learning activities) and physical activity. If your child or teen has been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a suspected concussion or head injury, they may not participate again until he/she is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance to participate in the activity from the health care provider.
2. Help them take time to get better. If your child or teen has a concussion, her or his brain needs time to heal. Your child or teen should limit activities while **he/she** is recovering from a concussion. Exercising or doing activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, using a computer, texting, or playing video games may worsen or prolong concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness). Rest will help your child recover more quickly. Your child may become upset that he/she cannot participate in activities.
3. Together with your child or teen, learn more about concussions. Talk about the potential long-term effects of concussion and the problems caused by returning to daily activities too quickly (especially physical activity and learning/concentration).

How can I help my child return to school safely after a concussion?

Help your child or teen get needed support when returning to school after a concussion. Talk with your child's school administrators, teachers, school nurse, coach, and counselor about your child's concussion and symptoms. Your child may feel frustrated, sad, and even angry because s/he cannot keep up with school work and learn as well after a concussion. Your child may also feel isolated from peers and social networks. Talk often with your child about these issues and offer your support and encouragement. As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually. Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed,
- Spend fewer hours at school,
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments,
- Receive help with schoolwork, and/or
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer.

To learn more about concussion go to :

www.cdc.gov/Concussion or call 1.800.CDC.INFO.



PARENT & ATHLETE AGREEMENT

As a Parent and as an Athlete it is important to recognize the signs, symptoms, and behaviors of concussions. By signing this form you are stating that you understand the importance of recognizing and responding to the signs, symptoms, and behaviors of a concussion or head injury.

Parent Agreement:

I _____ have read the Parent Concussion and Head Injury Information and understand what a concussion is and how it may be caused. I also understand the common signs, symptoms, and behaviors. I agree that my child must be removed from practice/play if a concussion is suspected.

I understand that it is my responsibility to seek medical treatment if a suspected concussion is reported to me.

I understand that my child cannot return to practice/play until providing written clearance from an appropriate health care provider to his/her coach.

I understand the possible consequences of my child returning to practice/play too soon.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Athlete Agreement:

I _____ have read the Athlete Concussion and Head Injury Information and understand what a concussion is and how it may be caused.

I understand the importance of reporting a suspected concussion to my coaches and my parents/guardian.

I understand that I must be removed from practice/play if a concussion is suspected. I understand that I must provide written clearance from an appropriate health care provider to my coach before returning to practice/play.

I understand the possible consequence of returning to practice/play too soon and that my brain needs time to heal.

Athlete Signature _____ Date _____



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