

Concussion Facts

Parents & Guardians



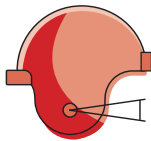
What is a concussion?

When an athlete gets their “bell rung” or gets “lit up” they have suffered a concussion. Concussions are a type of *traumatic brain injury (TBI)*. When a child or adolescent sustains a concussion, their brain may bounce or twist inside the skull, sometimes stretching or damaging brain cells and causing chemical changes within the brain. This movement interrupts the brain’s functioning and can impact your child physically, emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally.



How do concussions happen?

Concussions are caused by a bump, blow, hit, or jolt to the head or body that moves the head and brain rapidly back and forth. Common causes are falls and being hit against or by another person or object. Your child’s head does not have to be struck to cause a concussion — a body-to-body hit has the potential to cause a concussion.



Can concussion risk be reduced?

YES! There are ways to reduce your child’s risk of a concussion. Talk to your child about practicing good sportsmanship and following coaches’ instructions for safe game play. Make sure bicycle, athletic, and ATV helmets fit properly and are worn consistently. While a helmet doesn’t prevent a concussion, it does protect your child’s head from more severe head injuries. Make sure your child’s school and sports organizations have established concussion policies and protocols; they should have procedures in place for coach training and returning to learn and play after a concussion.



Can my child keep playing after a concussion?

The brain needs time to heal after a concussion. An athlete who *continues to play* or who *returns to play too soon* — before the brain has finished healing — has a greater chance of getting another concussion. **A repeat concussion that occurs while the brain is still healing can be very serious and can affect a child for a lifetime. It can even be fatal.** If you suspect your child has sustained a concussion during a practice or a game, make sure they are **immediately** removed from play. Do **not** allow your child to return to play on the same day as the injury.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

There are many signs and symptoms of a concussion. **Concussion symptoms may appear minutes, hours, or days after the initial injury.** Symptoms may be physical, emotional, behavioral, or cognitive (affect thinking). You may observe these signs in your child or your child may report symptoms to you.

Physical

- Headache or pressure in the head
- Dizziness, balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sensitivity to noise, ringing in ears
- Sensitivity to light, blurry or double vision
- Feels tired
- Tingling
- Does not “feel right”
- Seems dazed, stunned

Emotional/Behavioral

- Becomes irritable
- Becomes sad or depressed
- More emotional than usual
- Anxious or nervous
- Personality or behavioral changes, such as becoming impulsive

Cognitive

- Trouble thinking clearly
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble remembering, can’t recall events before or after the hit
- Feels sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Feels “slowed down”
- Repeats questions or answers questions more slowly
- Confusion
- Forgets routine things

DANGER SIGNS

If one or more of these signs emerges after a hit to the head or body, **IMMEDIATELY** call 911 or take your child to the nearest emergency room.

- One pupil larger than the other
- Drowsy or cannot wake up
- Headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness
- Decreased coordination
- Loss of consciousness
- Repeated vomiting or ongoing nausea
- Shaking or twitching (convulsions or seizures)
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation

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