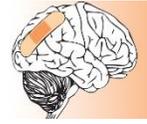


# KNOW YOUR CONCUSSION ABC'S

Assess the Situation—Be Alert for Signs & Symptoms—Contact a Health Care Provider



## What is a concussion?

A concussion is a 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 a mild bump to the head can be serious.

## What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a 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 is acting or feeling, if symptoms are getting worse, or if he/she just "doesn't feel right". Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

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

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appears dazed or stunned</li><li>• Is confused about events</li><li>• Answers questions slowly</li><li>• Repeats questions</li><li>• Can't recall events prior to hit, bump, or fall</li><li>• Loses consciousness (even briefly)</li><li>• Shows behavior or personality changes</li><li>• Forgets class schedule or assignments</li></ul> 	<p><b>Thinking/Remembering:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty thinking clearly</li><li>• Difficulty concentrating or remembering</li><li>• Feeling more slowed down</li><li>• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, groggy</li></ul> <p><b>Physical:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache or "pressure" in head</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Balance problems or dizziness</li><li>• Fatigue or feeling tired</li><li>• Blurry or double vision</li><li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li><li>• Numbness or tingling</li><li>• Does not "feel right"</li></ul>	<p><b>Emotional:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Irritable</li><li>• Sad</li><li>• More emotional than usual</li><li>• Nervous</li></ul>  <p><b>Sleep:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drowsy</li><li>• Sleeps less than usual</li><li>• Sleeps more than usual</li><li>• Has trouble falling asleep</li></ul> <p><b>*Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.</b></p>
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## What should I do if my child or teen has a concussion?

1. **Seek medical attention right away.** 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) and physical activity. If your child has been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a suspected or confirmed 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 has a concussion, their brain needs time to heal. Your child should limit activities while he/she is recovering from a concussion. Exercising or 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 and 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, learn about concussions.** Talk about the potential long-term effects of concussion and the problems caused by returning too soon to daily activities too quickly (especially physical activity and learning/concentration).

### DANGER SIGNS OF A CONCUSSION:

Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. Your child should be seen in an emergency department right away if he/she has: one pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) is larger than the other, is difficult to arouse, has a 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, or loss of consciousness (even briefly).

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

Help your child 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 he/she cannot keep up with schoolwork 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. Those 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.

**\*\*Children and teens with a suspected 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 class, Sports conditioning, weight lifting, practices or games, or physical activity at recess.**