

Concussions

What Parents Need to Know

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a blow to the head, face, neck, or body. Concussions do not always result in a loss of consciousness. They result in impaired brain function that usually resolves quickly; 80 to 90 percent of TBIs are resolved within two weeks.

Are these injuries serious?

Yes. Injuries to the head can result in serious issues such as epilepsy, post-concussion syndrome, impaired mental function, headaches, and vertigo. In rare instances, repeat concussions can lead to a condition known as “second impact syndrome,” which can be fatal.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

Physical	Headache, fuzzy or blurry vision, dizziness, fatigue, drowsiness, sensitivity to light, sensitivity to noise, balance problems, nausea, vomiting
Cognitive	Confusion, feeling slowed down, difficulty concentrating, difficulty remembering new information
Emotional	Irritability, sadness, feeling more emotional, nervousness, anxiety
Sleep	Sleeping more or less than usual, trouble falling asleep

What should I do if my child suffers a concussion?

If your child exhibits any of the signs and symptoms of a concussion, he or she should be immediately removed from play and evaluated by a medical professional with concussion training or experience.

In the past, players were encouraged to get back on the field when they “got dinged” or suffered a head injury with no visible evidence of harm. Today we know that concussions are a serious threat to the long-term health of student athletes. Talk with your child about the dangers of playing with a head injury. Encourage children to report concussion symptoms they experience or think their teammates are experiencing.

When is it ok to return to the playing field?

Your child should never resume athletic activity until completely free of all signs and symptoms of a concussion. The amount of time it takes to resume athletic activity will vary for each child. A health care professional will guide your child through a gradual return-to-play process and eventually clear him or her to resume activity.

How will a concussion affect my child’s schoolwork?

After a concussion, some students require cognitive rest to heal properly. Balancing an athlete’s physical recovery with his or her academic performance is difficult and takes coordination among many parties. Work with your child, the treating health care professional, the school, and your child’s teachers to create a plan for recovery. In some cases, cognitive rest may include abstaining from bright screens such as computers, TVs, and cell phones.