

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body
- Changes the way your brain normally works
- Occurs during practices or games in any sport or recreational activity
- Happens even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged" or "had your bell rung."

All concussions should be taken seriously. A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities (such as playing video games, working on a computer, studying, driving, or exercising). Most people with a concussion get better, but it is important to give your brain time to heal

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION:

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days after the injury. If your child reports one or more symptoms of concussions listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, keep your child out of play and seek medical attention right away.

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- **Loss of Consciousness**
 - **Confusion / disorientation**
 - **Memory loss**
 - **Slow responses or movements**
 - **Inability to focus**
 - **Headache**
 - **Excessive drowsiness**
 - **Feeling "in a fog", "zoned out"**
 - **Vacant stare, "glassy eyed"**
 - **Overly emotional**
 - **Dizziness or loss of balance**
 - **Slurred/incoherent speech**
 - **Blurry or double vision**
 - **Sensitivity to light**
 - **Nausea/Vomiting**

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION:

1. **Keep your child out of play.** If your child has a concussion, her/his brain needs time to heal. Don't let your child return to play the day of the injury and until a health care provider says your child is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.



If you think your child has a concussion take them out of the game and contact your family doctor or nurse practitioner immediately to book an appointment.



PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

2. Seek medical attention right away.

Is Emergency Medical Care Needed?

WATCH FOR THESE “RED FLAGS”

- **Loss of consciousness >1 minute**
- **Suspected seizure (jerking movements)**
- **Weakness or numbness/tingling**
- **Confusion, agitation, drowsiness**
- **Persistent vomiting**
- **Severe neck pain or neck pain with numbness/tingling**

ANY OF THE ABOVE REQUIRE AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

Whether or not seen in ER, parents should contact their family doctor or nurse practitioner as soon as possible. They will help decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.

3. **Diet.** Drink only clear liquids for the first 8-12 hours and eat reduced amounts of food thereafter for the remainder of the first 24 hours.
4. **Pain Medication.** Do not take any pain medication except Tylenol. Dosing instructions on the bottle should be followed.
5. **Educate your child that it's not smart to play with a concussion.** Rest is key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let your child convince you that s/he's "just fine."
6. **Tell all of your child's coaches and teachers about ANY concussion.** Coaches, teachers, and other school staff should know if your child has ever had a concussion. Your child may need to limit activities while s/he is recovering from a concussion. Things such as studying, driving, working on a computer, playing video games, or exercising may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. Talk to your health care provider, as well as your child's coaches and teachers. If needed, they can help adjust your child's school activities during her/his recovery.



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APPENDIX C