

CONCUSSION

A FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION

A concussion is a type of injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions 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 TO DO FOR A CONCUSSION

Seek medical attention right away. A health care professional experience in evaluating for concussion can determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to normal activities (PE, school).

Help them take time to get better. If your child has a concussion, her brain needs time to heal. She may need to limit activities while she is recovering from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration (studying, working on the computer, playing video games) may may symptoms worse.

Together with your child, learn more about concussions. The CDC is a great resource: www.cdc.gov/Concussion

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Help your child get needed support when returning to school after a concussion. Talk with teachers, the school nurse, coaches, and counselor about your child's concussion and symptoms. Your child may need to take rest breaks throughout the day or spend fewer hours at school. He may need to be given more time to take tests or complete assignments, receive help with school work, or reduce time spent reading, writing or on the computer.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after an injury or may not appear to 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 your child "doesn't feel right". If your child or teen reports one or more of the symptoms of concussion listed here, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- 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/TEEN

- 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

DANGER SIGNS - GO TO THE ER FOR

- one pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other
- drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- a headache that gets worse and does not go away
- weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- repeating 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)