A Fact Sheet for Parents

**A**ssess the situation

**B**e alert for signs and symptoms

**C**ontact a health care professional

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of 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 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.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of 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 or teen is acting or feeling, if symptoms are getting worse,

or if s/he just “doesn’t feel right.” Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

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

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GURADIANS SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD OR TEEN

• 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

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

\*Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.

To download this fact sheet in Spanish, please visit: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion.](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion) Para obtener una copia electrónica de esta hoja de información en español, por favor visite: [www.cdc.gov/Concussion.](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion)

WI Department of Public Instruction adapted materials from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

DANGER SIGNS

Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. Your child or teen should be seen in an emergency department right away if s/he has:

• One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other

• Difficult to arouse

• 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

• Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

Children and teens with a 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 (PE) class,

• Sports practices or games, or

• Physical activity at recess.

What should I do if my child or teen has a concussion?

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

How can I help my child return to school safely after a concussion?
Help your child or teen 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 s/he cannot keep up with school work and learn as well after ac 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. Children and teens 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.

To learn more about concussion go to :

 [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion) or call 1.800.CDC.INFO.