



Concussion Information for Parents

How to identify a concussion

Concussions are dynamic injuries, and may present very differently from person to person. Symptoms may be present immediately following an injury, or take several hours to develop. You may observe your child showing changes in emotions (more irritable, sadness, nervousness), changes in their memory and cognition (feeling slowed down, difficulty concentrating, trouble remembering), or mentioning they feel physically different (headache, blurred vision, nausea, bothered by bright lights or loud noises, abnormal fatigue, changes in sleep patterns).

What to do if a concussion is suspected

If you suspect your child has a concussion, remove them from activity immediately. Have your child evaluated by your family practitioner, school athletic trainer or another credentialed care provider as soon as possible. Teenagers should not be allowed to drive until cleared to do so.

What to expect in the first few days

If your child experiences headaches, acetaminophen (Tylenol) is the most commonly accepted medicine to use. Check with your child's doctor before using any other medicines. Be aware of and avoid environments that your child may be sensitive to (bright lights, loud noises, lots of movement). Encourage rest, but be aware that frequent and long naps can hinder normal sleeping patterns.

If your child experiences repeated vomiting, has symptoms that worsen, has difficulty answering simple questions or decreased levels of consciousness, take them to your local emergency department immediately.

Length of Symptoms

Most teenagers recover from a concussion within two to three weeks, and are back to school full time within the first week. Everyone recovers at a different rate, and with different symptoms, making predictions difficult. Symptoms that last longer than two weeks should be closely monitored by a healthcare provider trained in concussion management.

Providing treatment for concussions

Rest. It is important to get physical and cognitive rest in the immediate days following a concussion. Avoiding triggers that are commonly known to worsen symptoms (video games, reading, watching t.v., loud noise, bright lights, computer and tablet screens, physical exertion) can help with recovery time. When symptoms begin to improve, it is okay to slowly reintroduce the above triggers on a limited basis, unless symptoms worsen or reemerge. Often light activity like walking benefits the recovery process.

Returning to school and sport

While recovering, your child's school should make adjustments based on symptoms and needs. Once a student has returned to full academics, they should begin a closely monitored return to play.