

CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up immediately after the injury or may not appear to be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps that your children and you can take to protect them from injuries such as concussion:

- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards. Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS SUFFERED A CONCUSSION?

1. **Seek medical attention immediately.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
2. **Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon – while the brain is still healing – risk a greater chance of suffering a second concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage and affect your child for a lifetime.
3. **Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child suffered in another sport or activity unless you tell him or her.

IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.

[Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Safe Kids USA]