



Concussions

A concussion is a type of mild traumatic brain injury that results from a bump, blow or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a powerful force applied to another area of the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Even a mild bump or blow can be serious and cause significant injury. Loss of consciousness is not required to be diagnosed with a concussion.

Signs and symptoms of a concussion

The following signs and symptoms can show up immediately following an injury or may not appear for days to weeks following the injury.

- Headache or complaints of “pressure in the head”
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness, moves clumsily
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Concentration or memory problems
- Answers questions slowly
- Forgets instruction
- Feels confused, sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Mood, behavior or personality changes

What if my child has a concussion?

1. Seek medical attention immediately A qualified healthcare professional with experience in diagnosing and managing concussions can decide the severity of the concussion, further treatment options, and when it is safe for your child to return to regular activities and sports.

2. Keep your child out of play Do not allow your child to return to play the day of the injury and until they are cleared by a qualified healthcare professional. When children return to play too soon, while the brain is still healing, they are at much greater risk for having a second concussion. When concussions occur close together, they can be very serious and potentially cause Second Impact Syndrome. Second Impact Syndrome can lead to permanent brain damage or even death.

3. Notify your coach of previous injuries Coaches should know if your child has had a previous concussion. Coaches may not know about a concussion that occurred in another sport or activity unless you inform them.

How do I help my child get better?

Concussions take time to heal. Sometimes it is difficult to tell when the brain has completely healed because a concussion cannot be located on any type of imaging of the brain (CT, MRI).

- Rest from physical and cognitive activity is very important. While ignoring symptoms and trying to push through a concussion often makes the symptoms worse, a gradual return to both physical and cognitive activity overseen by a healthcare professional with experience managing concussions is the recommended course of action. Doing too much or doing nothing at all can often complicate the concussion and lengthen recovery.
- If symptoms return after being absent or new symptoms begin as your child begins to return to activities, it may be an indication of lingering effects of concussion. It is important to utilize an approach of rest and recovery following concussion.
- Following a concussion, the primary concern is avoiding further injury. Symptoms may vary in terms of presentation, duration and severity, however further injury to the brain is the biggest risk factor for making a concussion worse.

When is it safe to return to play?

No matter how minor the concussion, all athletes should be evaluated by a qualified health care professional prior to returning to play. Returning to play is done in a stepwise fashion as to slowly return the child back to their sport or activity while preventing re-injury. When your child begins to tolerate minimal symptoms with daily activities, such as home or school based tasks, your child may be recommended to initiate a progression for return to physical activity. All children must be cleared by their healthcare provider prior to returning to play.

What if I have questions after normal clinic hours?

Normal Clinic Hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call our main clinic number at 469-303-3000 to reach our 24-hour nurse advice line after hours. The nurse advice line is available in English and Spanish.

Need immediate treatment for a concussion?

The Children's HealthSM Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine offers treatment for all sport-related injuries. Call to book your appointment today. With same-day and next-day appointments, we can get you in and back in the game.

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