

# Kids and concussions: What to know



Many kids get a bump or blow to the head while playing sports or other activities. If the hit is hard enough, a child can have a concussion, which is a type of traumatic brain injury.

During a concussion, the brain bumps against the inside of the skull. This can cause changes in the way the brain works and can lead to long-term problems.

## ***How do I know if my child had a concussion?***

Many people mistakenly think that if the child doesn't "black out," then they're okay. Although losing consciousness is a sign that a concussion is likely, it's not the only way to know. A concussion can happen even if the child never loses consciousness. Look for:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Tiredness

Some kids don't show symptoms right away. If your child suffered a hit to the head, look for these problems that can occur days or weeks after a concussion:

- Trouble concentrating or problems with schoolwork
- Headaches
- Memory problems
- Confusion or changes in behavior
- Changes in their movement, coordination or walking

Anything that seems unusual after a blow to the head should be checked by a doctor.



## ***What to do after a concussion***

Right after the injury, the child should:

- Stop the sport or activity.
- Get medical help immediately.
- Lie down on back with head and shoulders slightly raised while waiting for help to arrive.

Parents or adults should watch the child's breathing and whether they stay awake. If the child isn't breathing or doesn't have a pulse, begin CPR.

## ***Returning to sports or activities***

The brain needs time to heal after a concussion. If the child starts activities too soon, they are more likely to have another concussion and to suffer more serious brain damage. Ask the child's doctor when they can gradually begin physical and mental activities again.

## ***Preventing concussions***

To prevent a brain injury like a concussion, make sure your child:

- Wears a helmet during all contact sports, such as football, or in cases where a fall could happen, such as while biking, skating, horseback riding, and skiing.
- Wears a seatbelt and/or has the right car seat for riding in a vehicle.

Concussions can happen to the best athletes with the most careful parents. If it happens to your child, remember to give the child's brain plenty of time to rest and recover. This can help avoid long-term problems down the road.

*Source: National Institutes of Health*