



## INFORMATION SHEET: CONCUSSION

The term concussion means temporary disruptions to brain function, this can happen with any head injury with or without loss of consciousness. A concussion is also known as a mild traumatic brain injury. The brain is made of soft tissue, cushioned by spinal fluid and encased in the hard protective skull. The brain can move around inside the skull and can bang against it, if it bangs against the skull, it may be bruised and blood vessels and nerves could be damaged leading to a concussion.

Anyone who has had a head injury should be watched closely for signs of concussion and if they show any of the symptoms they should be seen by a doctor immediately.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

#### PHYSICAL

- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Nausea and Vomiting.
- Difficulty with coordination and balance.
- Blurred Vision.

#### COGNITIVE

- Feeling confused and dazed.
- Difficulty concentrating, thinking or making decisions.
- Difficulty remembering things.
- Slurred speech or saying things that don't make sense.

#### EMOTIONAL

- Feeling anxious or irritable for no apparent reason.
- Feeling sad or more emotional than normal.

#### SLEEP RELATED

- Sleepiness or difficulty falling asleep.
- Sleeping more or less than usual.
- Symptoms of concussion may not show up straight away, they can develop 24-72 hours later.

#### CALL AN AMBULANCE OR GO TO THE ER IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD

- Can't be wakened.
- Has convulsions or seizures.
- Has slurred speech.



- Seems to be getting more confused, sleepy, restless or agitated.
- Has vomited more than once.
- Has a headache that gets worse or won't go away.

Most children recover quickly from a concussion, however some symptoms can linger for several weeks or months. It is important to watch for these symptoms and contact your doctor if they last as your child may need further examination and treatment.

#### TREATMENT

- Each concussion is unique so symptoms can differ in their severity. Treatment will depend on the child's condition.
- The child should be watched closely for 24-48 hours (there is no need to wake a sleeping child).
- Physical Rest – Not doing sports or other physical activities until the concussion has gone.
- Mental Rest – Avoid cognitive (thinking) activities such as computers and mobile phones. School work, watching TV, video games and reading are ok providing symptoms do not worsen with them. If symptoms worsen, then these activities must be avoided.
- Eating well and drinking plenty of non-caffeinated drinks will also aid recovery.
- Bright lights and loud noises should be avoided.
- No operating of heavy machinery and no activities that require quick reactions and decision making.
- The most important thing to remember is to get the ok from your doctor before returning to activities. It is very important that anyone with a concussion heals completely before returning to any activities that could lead to another concussion.

#### PREVENTION

Nothing can prevent every concussion, but wearing protective gear will help prevent many.

Properly fitting appropriate head gear and safety equipment should be worn when playing contact sport, biking, rollerblading, skateboarding, snowboarding and skiing.

Child proofing your home can go a long way to protecting your infant or toddler. Keeping your child safe in the car, using child seats and seat belts appropriately will significantly reduce the risk of head injury in a car accident.

#### RETURNING TO SCHOOL

It is important to take the advice of your doctor and it may be necessary to return to school gradually.

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