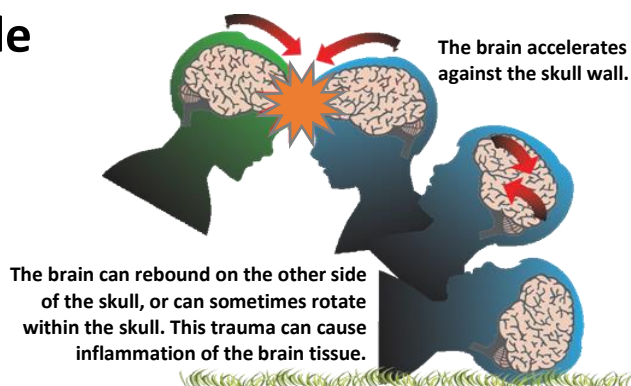


Concussion Educational Guide

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of brain injury caused by a hard bump or hit to the head, or a blow to another part of the body that then forcefully shakes the head. When this impact is powerful enough to cause the brain to move inside the skull, a concussion may occur.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

	Thinking	Signs of confusion and forgetfulness	Concentration or memory problems	Difficulty remembering new information	Feeling Foggy
	Physical	Fainting or loss of consciousness Headache or “pressure” in the head	Nausea and/or vomiting Balance problems and dizziness	Vision changes (blurry or double vision) Feeling tired or low energy	Sensitivity to light and/or sound
	Emotion/Mood	Feeling anxious or irritable, or sad for no apparent reason	Any change in personality or normal behavior	Complaints of not feeling right or normal	
	Sleep	Feeling drowsy or sluggish	Change in sleep patterns		

WHEN SHOULD I GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM?

Go to the Emergency Room for further evaluation if you are worried and/or if your child is showing worsening symptoms, including a severe headache such as the “worst headache of their life,” excessive vomiting, increased confusion, seizures or “having a fit”, slow or slurred speech, difficulty staying awake or answering simple questions—or if you think your child’s neck was seriously injured.

WHAT TO DO:

- **Sometimes kids may not experience symptoms until hours or the next day after the injury.** Have them avoid loud, busy activities (e.g., attending public events, the movie theater), and restrict them from sports and excessive physical exercise including PE class and recess.
- **Recovery from concussion requires both mental and physical rest to give the brain time to heal.** This means limited text messaging, video games, TV, social media, and other screen time. Initially school attendance may also be restricted for a few days, and homework and other school activities reduced.
- **Do not use ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve) for the first 48 hours for your child’s concussion headache.** There is a potential risk of increased bleeding in the brain from these non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), so if your child has a brain bleed from the concussion, this could make things worse. You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) to help decrease the headache or other pain. After the first 48 hours, NSAIDs may be used to help with concussion headaches. Contact your child’s healthcare provider for any medication concerns.
- **Your child may be tired and need more sleep, especially the initial few days.** The first night, you can check for normal breathing every few hours while sleeping but DO NOT wake your child up unless you are concerned. If your child cannot be woken up, call 911 immediately. Allow your child to take naps during the day but limit them to one hour maximum so that the onset of nighttime sleep and duration of sleep are not disrupted.
- **Make sure your child stays hydrated and eats healthy foods** (combining carbohydrates and protein) **every 3 to 4 hours** while recovering from a concussion. The brain needs blood to bring nutrients to it for healing, and dehydration and low blood sugar may also worsen concussion symptoms.
- **Full recovery** from a concussion is different for each child; if managed well, most children will recover within 4 weeks, although some may take a few weeks longer.
- **Your child should not return to sports, PE class, or actively play during recess or at home until given permission by a healthcare professional with experience managing concussions.** You do not have to wait until all concussion symptoms are gone before starting light exercise (such as walks) as long as the symptoms don’t get worse.

Be aware that per California state laws, return to play (i.e., a sports competition or event) cannot be sooner than 7 days after evaluation by a physician (MD/DO) who has made the diagnosis of concussion AND only after completing a stepwise return to play program. Written physician clearance to return to practices and games is required by law for all high school sports, and 27 designated youth sports and activities run by organizations that conduct competitions, training, camps or clubs.

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