

# What is a Concussion?

## FACTS FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.



### What are the signs and symptoms?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussions can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days after the injury. If your child reports one or more symptoms of a concussion listed below, or if you noticed the signs yourself, keep your child out of physical activity and seek medical attention immediately.



### Signs Observed by Parents/Guardians

- ▶ Appearing dazed or stunned
- ▶ Confusion about assignment or position
- ▶ Forgetting an instruction
- ▶ Unsure of game, score, or opponent
- ▶ Moving clumsily
- ▶ Answering questions slowly
- ▶ Loss of consciousness (even briefly)
- ▶ Showing mood, behaviour, or personality changes
- ▶ Difficulty recalling events prior to and 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 or noise
- ▶ Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- ▶ Concentration or memory problems
- ▶ Confusion
- ▶ Change in sleep patterns
- ▶ Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

### How can you help your child prevent a concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your child can take to protect themselves from concussions and other injuries, including:

- ▶ Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. It should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- ▶ Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

## What Should You Do If You Think Your Child Has A Concussion?

**1** **Keep your child out of physical activity.** If your child has a concussion, her/his brain needs time to heal. Don't let your child return to physical activity the day of the injury and until a medical doctor/nurse practitioner, experienced in evaluating for concussions, reports your child is symptom-free and recommender's a return to physical activity. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term effects. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage or even death.

**2** **Seek medical attention right away.** A medical doctor/nurse practitioner experienced in evaluating concussions will be able to decide the seriousness of the concussion and when it is safe for your child to return to learn and return to physical activity.

**3** **Teach your child that it's not smart to engage in physical activity with a concussion.** Rest is key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let your child convince you that she/he's “just fine.”

**4** **Tell all of your child's coaches and the school Administrator about ANY concussion.** Coaches and other school staff should know if your child has ever had a concussion. Your child may need to limit activities while she/he is recovering from a concussion. Activities such as studying, driving, working on a computer, playing video games, or exercising may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or worsen. Talk to your medical doctor/nurse practitioner, as well as your child's coaches and school staff. If needed, they can help adjust your child's school activities during her/his recovery.

If you think your child might have a concussion:

- ➔ **Don't assess it yourself.**
- ➔ **Take her/him out of physical activity.**
- ➔ **Seek the advice of a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.**

