

## Concussions

A concussion is a type of head injury. It happens when the brain moves quickly inside the skull because of a bump, jolt, or hit to the head.

When a concussion happens:

- The injury to the brain is usually only for a short time (temporary).
- Your child may think, act, or feel differently for a short time.
- Watch over your child carefully for the next 4 to 8 hours.

**If you think your child has a concussion, do at least one of the following:**

- Call your child's doctor or health care provider for instructions.
- Go to an urgent care clinic or emergency department.
- Schedule an appointment with the Nationwide Children's Hospital Concussion Center.



### The First 24 to 48 Hours

- Let your child rest and nap as needed during the day. They may need to stay home from school or daycare for 1 to 2 days.
- Your child needs a good night's sleep. You don't need to wake them up to check on them.
- Use ice packs on the head or neck to ease pain.
- If they have a minor headache within 24 hours, give them an over-the-counter (OTC) pain medicine, like acetaminophen (Tylenol®). After 24 hours, it's also okay to **give ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®)**. Read the label to know the right dose for your child.

- Avoid screens, like TV, computers, tablets, and cell phones.
- Most children go back to school in 1 to 3 days after a concussion.
  - Some symptoms may not go away before they return.
  - Tell school staff they had a head injury. This helps staff prepare for any changes your child may have, like issues with light, noise, behavior, focus, or memory.
  - Also tell school staff about adjusting their daily school demands to help with learning.
- Schedule a follow-up appointment with your child’s doctor or health care provider. At that visit, tell them any problems your child is still having.

## Signs and Symptoms

Concussion symptoms can be mild or severe. They can also come and go. They may last minutes to weeks, but they should all go away with time.

<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headache or pressure in the head</li> <li>• Nausea or throwing up (vomiting)</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light</li> <li>• Sensitivity to noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neck pain</li> <li>• Balance problems</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Blurred vision</li> </ul>
<b>Thinking (cognitive)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confused</li> <li>• Feeling like you’re in a fog</li> <li>• Short attention span</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems remembering</li> <li>• Not feeling normal</li> <li>• Feeling slowed down</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irritable, moody, fussy</li> <li>• More emotional than usual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sad</li> <li>• Nervous or anxious</li> </ul>
<b>Sleep</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drowsy</li> <li>• Sleeping more or less than usual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low energy</li> <li>• Trouble falling asleep</li> </ul>

## When to Seek Emergency Help

Take your child to the closest emergency department (ED) or call their doctor or health care provider for instructions if they:

- Have repeated or extreme vomiting.
- Have numbness or tingling in the face, arms, or legs.
- Don’t wake up when you touch and talk to them.
- Have blurry or double vision.

- Slur their speech.
- Stagger or fall while walking.
- Have hearing problems.
- Convulse or stare into space, looking dazed, twitching, or shaking (seizures).
- Have a change in behavior or personality that puts them or others at risk of harm.
- Seem to be getting worse instead of better.
- Are weak in an arm or leg.
- Complain of headaches getting worse that don't get better with over-the-counter pain medicine.
- Bleed from the ears or have clear fluid drain from the nose or ears.
- Have eye changes like crossed eyes, droopy eyelids, or trouble using their eyes.
- Are hard to wake up during the day or quickly fall back to sleep after waking up.

## Activities Allowed

Your child can do the following activities after 1 to 2 days of rest, as long as their symptoms don't get worse:

- Watch TV and listen to music at low volume.
- Use technology on a limited basis, like computers, video games, phones, or tablets.
- Play simple board or card games, like Go Fish or Candy Land®.
- Read, draw, and do homework for short periods of time.
- Go on walks and do other light exercise.
- Relax with friends.

You'll know your child is better when they can do regular activities and exercise without concussion symptoms.

## Activities Not Allowed

Until your child's doctor or health care provider says it's safe, they are not allowed to:

- Take part in gym class and active recess.
- Play contact sports and rough play.
- Do any balancing activities, like bike riding, skateboarding, or swimming.
- Drive motor vehicles like cars, ATVs, motorcycles, motor scooters, or snowmobiles.
- **Do any activities that could lead to another head injury.** This may worsen symptoms and slow down recovery time.

## **Preventing Concussions**

- Passenger safety – Use car seats or booster seats for the age and size of your child.
- Sports safety – Make sure your child:
  - Wears a helmet that fits well.
  - Wears protective gear, like elbow and knee pads or wrist guards, when using a bike, skateboard, scooter, roller skates, or playing in a contact sport, like football.
  - Learns the right way to play sports, like tackling in football or heading the ball in soccer.
- Street safety – Teach your child to play where it's safe.