



CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET FOR COACHES

This information sheet is for educational purposes only. If you would like to provide feedback on this information sheet please visit sitoutconcussion.org.au and complete the feedback form.

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by sudden strong movement of the brain against the skull. This is caused by a collision with another person or object. A child does not need to be knocked out (lose consciousness) to have concussion. Most concussion injuries do not involve any loss of consciousness.

If a child receives a bump or blow to the head or body and that causes a jarring of the head or neck - it is important to monitor them for signs and symptoms.

Sport and play are an important part of the healthy growth and development of children and young people, and they should be encouraged to participate. It is important however to be aware of concussion so that children may be given the best care when needed.

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE A CHILD TO A DOCTOR?

If a student has any of the signs or symptoms listed, then they should be assessed by a doctor. It is important to note when, for how long and how many there are so you can tell the doctor. There is a [concussion management tool](#) and [signs and symptoms checklist](#) available to assist.

Signs observed by others:

- Appearing dazed or stunned
- Repeating questions
- Can't recall events before or after the injury
- Confused about events
- Showing personality or behaviour changes



Symptoms reported by the child:

- Headache or "pressure" in the head
- Dizziness and/or loss of balance
- Feeling tired
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Trouble sleeping
- Does not "feel right"
- Feeling more emotional, e.g. sad or nervous
- Trouble thinking clearly, concentrating or remembering

To help remember the signs and symptoms of concussion think of the words **HEAD BUMP**:

- H**eadache
- E**ye trouble
- A**bnormal behaviour
- D**izziness
- B**alancing problems
- U**ncoordinated
- M**emory problems
- P**oor concentration

Signs and symptoms of concussion usually show up shortly after an injury. In some cases this does not occur until 24-48 hours after the injury. If there are no signs and symptoms at the time it is important to monitor the child for the duration of the activity they are participating in. It is also important to let the parent know what has happened so they can monitor their child at home.

Dial 000 or send the child to the nearest Emergency Department if these signs or symptoms appear, or are getting worse in the first 48 hours after a head injury.

- Seizure or convulsion
- Losing consciousness (even briefly)
- Slurred speech
- Ongoing vomiting
- Blurry or double vision
- Severe headache or headache is getting worse
- Ongoing or worse neck pain
- Weakness, numbness or tingling in the arms, legs or face
- Having trouble walking
- Being more confused, unusual behaviour, more irritable

In an emergency dial 000 for an ambulance.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT CONCUSSION?

Most people will have a quick and full recovery from their concussion. In some cases the recovery may take days, weeks, or longer. If someone has suffered a concussion in the past, then they are at a greater risk of having another one and they may also take longer to recover. Long term effects of concussion can include poor attention span, headache, impaired memory, behaviour problems, and learning difficulties.

The most common age for concussion in sports is around 14 years old. It is around this age the athlete is transitioning to adult sport with more intensity and competition. Also, many young people are still developing their musculoskeletal system and may be more uncoordinated and injury prone.

HOW DO I HELP A CHILD RETURN TO ACTIVITY?

Children should not participate in school or club sports or exercise until symptom free and cleared to do so by a doctor. After a concussion the child's reaction times and thinking may be slower putting them at risk of further injury.

The child will need to take a gradual and staged return to activity. This depends on the individual child and advice from their doctor. Ask the parent if the child has been cleared by a GP before allowing them to participate in sports or activities. A [return to activity plan](#) and [suggested activity resource](#) are available as tools to help assist in the safe return of the student.

HOW DO I HELP PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Safety must always come first during physical activity. Concussions can occur in any sport or activity. To help prevent concussion:

- Ensure that everyone follows all safety rules
- Encourage good sportsmanship and fair play at all times
- Ensure players are matched for skill and in size-appropriate groups
- Note: helmets are designed to reduce the risk of severe brain injury and skull fracture. Wearing a helmet does not prevent concussion.

Check to see if your sports club or school have concussion policies in place. Policy statements related to concussion may include:

- Commitment to safety and encouraging a culture of good sportsmanship
- A description of concussion
- Information or guidelines on when athletes can safely return to school and activity
- Policies and procedures to accommodate returning from concussion
- A statement that the child should not return to play or activity before returning to school

What action do I take if I suspect concussion?

1. Remove the child from play. If the child receives a bump or blow that causes a jarring of the head or neck it is important to check for signs and symptoms of concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion usually show up shortly after an injury. In some cases this does not occur until 24-48 hours after the injury. If there are no signs and symptoms at the time continue to monitor the child for the duration of the activity they are participating in. Let the parent know what has happened so they can monitor their child at home. Athletes should not return to activity the same day.
2. Refer the child for medical care. If the child has serious signs or symptoms of concussion they should be sent to the emergency department. If not serious, the child should be referred to a GP.
3. Inform the parent of the injury. Let the parent know about the possibility of concussion in their child. It is a good idea to have fact sheets available for parents. This sheet can help parents monitor their child for signs and symptoms at home.

For other resources about concussion visit the Concussion page on Kids Health Website: sitoutconcussion.org.au

