

Concussion (Minor head injury) in Children

Your Child's head is injured

Our medical team has not found any signs of a serious brain injury. A concussion is a type of brain injury that cannot be seen on a regular X-ray or scans. It can affect the way a child thinks and remembers things, and it can cause a variety of symptoms.

It is safe for your child to go home in your care. It is important that you check your child carefully over the next 24 to 72 hours. As a parent, you are the best person to notice any unusual behaviour in your child.

HOW TO CHECK YOUR CHILD AT HOME

Let your child sleep if he or she wants to. Sleep is good for your child but it is important to check your child over the next 24 to 48 hours.

Make sure your child:

- + Knows his or her name.
- + Knows who you are.
- + Knows where he or she is.
- + Wakes up easily as he or she normally does.
- + Can hold your hand tight with both hands.
- + Has no blood or fluid in the ears or nose.
- + Is breathing easily.
- + Is not in a lot of pain.

There is no need to wake up your child every 2-3 hours. Trust your gut feeling about your child. Some signs of a brain injury are changes that only someone who knows the child well might notice.

Call 9-1-1 right away if your child:

- + Loses balance when sitting or walking.
- + Falls or trips often.
- + Loses strength in an arm or leg.
- + Drops things.
- + Cannot see clearly (could complain of blurred vision or seeing double).
- + Difficulty breathing.
- + Has any unusual movements or body jerks and twitches (seizures).

WHEN TO BRING YOUR CHILD TO EMERGENCY

- + Your child is acting differently than his or her usual self.
- + Your child has no energy or wish to do anything.
- + Your child cannot do things he or she could do before the head injury.
- + Your child is restless, irritable or confused.
- + You have trouble waking your child up.
- + Your child has blood or yellow coloured fluid coming from the ears or nose.
- + Your child throws up (vomits) more than two times (once or twice is common and expected).
- + Your child has a headache that gets worse or does not get better even with pain medicine.
- + Your child is very young and:
 - Cannot be comforted or quieted.
 - Will not breast feed or eat.

Concussion (Minor Head Injury) in Children- Continued

Over the next 24 hours

- + You can give plain acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen for headache. DO NOT give aspirin for children less than 12 years old. Do NOT give sedatives or stronger pain medicines. They can cover up some important signs of injury. If simple pain medicines do not help, call your family doctor.
- + Your child might feel sick to the stomach (nauseated) for a few days. Give small snacks and drinks rather than big meals.
- + Keep your child where you can see him or her. Until your child is feeling well again, read or play quietly with your child. Do not allow rough play or games. Rest is important. Do not allow contact sports (like soccer, baseball, etc) or to ride a bike.

Tips for helping your child recover:

- + Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep at night and rest periods during the day.
- + Make sure your child returns to normal activities gradually, not all at once.
- + Limit noise and stimulation (such as TV, video games, computers and other electronics, loud music, etc.) to 1-2 hours/day.
- + Try to do one thing at a time with your child so your child does not get distracted.
- + To help your child remember things, write notes and use a calendar.
- + Talk about the injury with others who know your child (family members, friends, teachers, counsellors, babysitters, coaches, etc.). They need to understand what has happened so they can help.

- + For school aged children, follow the 'Return to Learn' then 'Return to Play' Communication tools attached.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

- + Concussion Awareness Training Tool (CATT). Go online to www.cattonline.com and click on 'Awareness Toolkit' (For parents, players, and coaches).
- + Parachute Canada. Go online to parachutecanada.org. Click on 'Concussion Resources'

TO LEARN MORE ASK

- + Your family doctor.
- + HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP

- Follow up with your primary care provider in ___ days.

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Find this information sheet on the BC Emergency Medicine Network website:

www.bcemn.ca/clinical_resource/concussion-in-children/