



# If Your Child or Teen Has a Concussion

## What is a concussion?

A concussion is a mild injury to the brain that can disrupt how the brain works. It is usually caused by a sudden blow or jolt to the head. Children can bump or hit their heads without getting a concussion.

## Common problems:

- Headaches
- Dizziness or balance problems
- Trouble with vision/seeing
- Sleep problems
- Trouble paying attention
- Irritability or grouchiness
- Sadness
- Sick to stomach or vomiting
- Low energy or being run down
- Bothered by light or noise
- Slowed thinking
- Difficulty remembering
- Easily upset or frustrated

Most people recover within one to two weeks. But, some people can take longer.

## How can you help?

- Keep your child safe. While symptoms are still present, it is important that your child does not hit his or her head again. For a while, your child will need to take a break from sports and other activities that might cause another head injury.
- Have your child rest. Doing too much too soon afterwards may make it worse.
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep. Some children need more sleep than usual in the first hours or days after injury.
- Eat healthy foods and drinking plenty of water
- Allow extra time to finish things and give more breaks. Learning and paying attention may take extra time.
- Be patient. Your child might seem cranky, more easily upset, or more tired and forgetful.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol that may worsen the symptoms

## When should I get medical help?

You should get IMMEDIATE medical help if your child displays:

- Headache that gets worse, lasts for a long time or is severe
- Confusion, extreme sleepiness or trouble waking up
- Vomiting three or more times
- Trouble moving or talking
- Seizure or convulsion (arms or legs shake uncontrollably)
- Major change in thinking or behavior



**School activity:**

- Tell your child’s school teacher, counselor and nurse about your child’s symptoms
- Return to school in \_\_\_\_\_ days
- Return for \_\_\_\_\_ hours or \_\_\_\_\_ half a day before returning for full days within \_\_\_\_\_
- Allowing rest time or breaks during the day
- Decrease homework and class work
- Allow assignments to be turned in late
- Putting off tests until the student is back to normal
- Giving extra time to complete tests
- Providing special seating to help the student focus and so the teacher can watch the student carefully
- No PE until cleared
- PE for non contact activities
- Full PE

**Sports and activity advice:**

- No contact until cleared by your doctor
- Full rest
- Cleared for low level activity like walking
- Cleared to start return to play guideline once back to normal. Progress to each step only when symptom free through the rest of the day..
  1. Low impact aerobic activity, gradually increasing in intensity.
  2. Low intensity impact activity like jogging.
  3. Impact aerobics such as running and some low weight or high repetition weight lifting.
  4. Non-contact drills and more intense weight lifting.
- Follow-up with Concussion Clinic prior to being cleared for full return to play
- May return to play with supervision of athletic trainer/ coach/ parent after successful completion of above
- Always wear the right protective equipment including helmets

**Follow-up**

- See your doctor in one week to discuss when to return to sports / physical activity.
- When you call to make the visit, tell them it is for a concussion.

**Who do I call if I have questions or problems?**

If you have questions call the clinic at (303) \_\_\_\_\_. You can also call the Denver Health NurseLine at (303) 739-1211 any time day or night.



**Special instructions:** \_\_\_\_\_