

# Concussions

## What you need to know



### What is the law?

**Schools:** The Return to Play Act of 2013 requires all public and private schools to create a concussion policy that, at a minimum, includes these standards:

- Prior to the beginning of each athletic season, an information sheet that informs parents or legal guardians of the risk of concussions must be provided.
- If a youth athlete (ages 7 to 18) participating in a youth athletic activity exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion, he must be removed from play and evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- Before a youth athlete can return to play, he must be cleared by a healthcare provider trained in the management of concussions.

**Recreational leagues:** The law requires recreational leagues to provide an information sheet on the risks of concussion at the time of registration to parents or legal guardians of youth athletes (ages 7 to 18).

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury caused by trauma. It can be caused by a hard bump on or a blow to or around the head, which causes the brain to move quickly inside the head.

You do not have to lose consciousness to sustain a concussion. If a concussion is not properly treated, it can make symptoms last longer and delay recovery. A second head trauma before recovery could lead to more serious injuries.

### What are the signs and symptoms?

There are many signs and symptoms linked with concussion. Your child may not have any symptoms until a few days after the injury. Signs are conditions observed by other people and symptoms are feelings reported by the athlete.

#### Signs observed by others

Athlete:

- |                                 |                                         |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| • Appears dazed or stunned      | • Moves clumsily                        |
| • Forgets plays                 | • Answers questions slowly              |
| • Is unsure of game or opponent | • Shows behavior or personality changes |

### Symptoms reported by athlete

- |             |                          |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| • Headache  | • Fuzzy vision           |
| • Nausea    | • Feeling foggy          |
| • Dizziness | • Concentration problems |

Visit [choa.org/concussion](http://choa.org/concussion) for a full list of signs and symptoms.

### What should you do if you suspect a concussion?

- Do not let your child play with a head injury.
- Check on your child often after the injury for new or worsening signs or symptoms. If the symptoms are getting worse, take him to the nearest emergency department.
- Take your child to the doctor for even one symptom of a concussion.
- Do not give your child pain medicines without talking to your child's doctor. Your child should stop all athletic activity until his doctor says it is OK. Your child must stay out of play until he is cleared by a licensed healthcare provider.
- Educate your child on concussions and why he cannot play until the symptoms are gone. Your child will need a gradual return to school and activities.
- Tell your child's coaches, school nurses and teachers if he has a concussion.

*In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.*

### Warning signs

#### Call your child's doctor right away if he has:

- |                                                 |                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • New signs that his doctor does not know about | • Trouble recognizing people or places                                          |
| • Existing signs that get worse                 | • Slurred speech                                                                |
| • Headaches that get worse                      | • Loss of consciousness                                                         |
| • A seizure                                     | • Blood or fluid coming from nose or ear                                        |
| • Neck pain                                     | • A large bump or bruise on scalp, especially in infants younger than 12 months |
| • Tiredness or is hard to wake                  |                                                                                 |
| • Continued vomiting                            |                                                                                 |
| • Weakness in the arms or legs                  |                                                                                 |

### Where can I find more information?



Call 404-785-KIDS (5437)



[choa.org/concussion](http://choa.org/concussion)