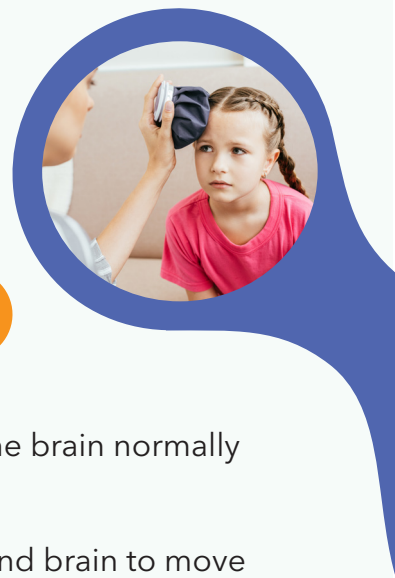


Concussion in Children and Teenagers



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a mild type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or hit to the head.

Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. What might look like a mild bump to the head or body can be still be enough to cause a concussion. Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be managed correctly.


Ways children and teenagers may experience a concussion include:

- Falls
- Sports
- School accidents
- Motor vehicle crashes
- Being struck by or against an object (e.g. colliding with a moving or stationary object, such as a wall)
- Assault (including domestic and family violence)

Signs and symptoms of concussion

Concussion can result in many different **signs** (things you can see) and **symptoms** (things that people say they are experiencing).

Sometimes the signs and symptoms might appear at the time the concussion occurred. In other cases, they take time to develop, showing up or getting worse in the hours or days that follow. That's why it's important to continue to monitor your child or teenager for 24 - 48 hours after a diagnosed or suspected concussion.

Immediate Signs	Immediate Symptoms	Delayed Symptoms
<p>Immediate signs of concussion include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No protective action when falling• Lying motionless• Slow to get up• Stumbling• Balance problems or poor coordination <p>You may see the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grab or hold their head• Look dazed or vacant• Appear confused or drowsy• Slurred or incoherent speech• Repeat questions	<p>Immediately after a concussion, a person may report experiencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache or pressure in their head• Dizziness• Changes in vision (e.g. double vision, blurred vision, worsening vision or "seeing stars")• Confusion• Memory loss (amnesia)• Increased irritability, frustration• Feeling tired or drowsy• Not feeling right• Nausea	<p>Examples of delayed symptoms include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent headaches• Difficulties remembering or concentrating• Sensitivity to light or noise• Feelings of sadness or anxiety• Changes in sleep patterns• Fatigue or tiring easily 



Red Flags

Red flags are signs or symptoms that may indicate more severe injury to the brain. If your child/teenager shows any of the following, **seek medical attention immediately**.

Go to your doctor, nearest hospital, or telephone an ambulance

- Difficulty recognising people or places
- Slurred speech
- Weakness or inability to move body as usual, decreased coordination
- Complaints about numbness, tingling, burning sensation in arms or legs
- Increased restlessness, agitation or confusion
- Unusual behaviour
- Severe or increasing headache
- Loss of consciousness or worsening conscious state (passing out)
- Increased drowsiness (changes to alertness) or hard to wake up
- Seizures or convulsions (twitching or shaking)
- Unequal pupil size in eyes
- Repeated vomiting
- Continuous bleeding or fluid from ear or nose
- Neck pain or tenderness

No two concussions are alike. The signs and symptoms experienced can differ from person to person, and different signs and symptoms can show up each time a concussion occurs. **Just one sign or symptom** is enough to indicate potential concussion.

Concussion Management

The first 24 - 48 hours following a concussion should be a period of relative (not strict) rest.

Area	Suggested action
Red flags	Your child/teenager should be observed by a responsible adult for the first 24 - 48 hours. Seek immediate medical attention if they develop any red flags.
Signs and Symptoms	It may be helpful to write down the signs or symptoms that your child/teenager is experiencing, when they happen, how long they last and how severe they are. If any of these signs or symptoms worry you, see your doctor as soon as possible.
Pain Relief	Use Paracetamol or Paracetamol/Codeine for headaches and pain management. Check the package for correct dose and use only as directed. Do not use Aspirin or other anti-inflammatory pain medications such as Ibuprofen or Naproxen (NSAIDs), which may increase the risk of complications. Codeine should only be used if approved by a doctor as it may cause sedation (sleepiness). Talk to your doctor about any other prescription medications already being taken.
Sleeping	It is ok for your child/teenager to sleep after a concussion if they feel tired. However, you should still monitor your child for red flags when they are sleeping.
Cognitive Activity	Light cognitive activities (e.g. reading) are ok during this time as long as they don't make symptoms worse. However, screen time should be limited in the first 48 hours after a concussion injury.
Physical Activity	Light physical activity is ok (e.g. walking, stationary bike riding) during this time as long as it does not make symptoms more than mildly or briefly worse.
Driving/ Operating heavy machinery	If your teenager has their driver's licence, do not allow them to drive for at least 24 hours after a concussion. They should not drive until their symptoms have resolved, or they have been cleared by a medical professional. You may need to arrange transportation options for your teenager. Similar precautions should be taken for operating heavy machinery if your teenager is taking practical skills-based classes (e.g. woodwork) or is enrolled in an apprenticeship.
Alcohol/ drugs	Do not allow your child/teenager to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes/vapes, or use illicit drugs, particularly following concussion. These can make symptoms worse and make it difficult to tell if your child/teenager is being affected by the concussion or not.
Air Travel	Avoid air travel during this time. Seek medical advice.



Recovery

Most children/teenagers fully recover from concussion within 4 weeks. However, some experience concussion symptoms for longer than expected. See your doctor if your child continues to experience ongoing symptoms. They may refer your child/teenager to one of a range of specialists if they do not improve. A graded (step-wise) return to activities can help the recovery process.

Return to Activity

Check with your school or club to see if they have return to learn or sport guidelines, to ensure your child follows a graded return to activity. You can find more guidance on returning to activity with Connectivity's [Return to Learn](#) and [Return to Sport](#) Fact Sheets.

More information Connectivity Traumatic Brain Injury Australia is an Australia-wide not-for-profit. For more information on concussion, you can speak to your doctor or healthcare professional **Disclaimer** This flyer and the Connectivity website does not offer medical advice for individuals. If you have suffered a concussion, please seek medical advice.

