

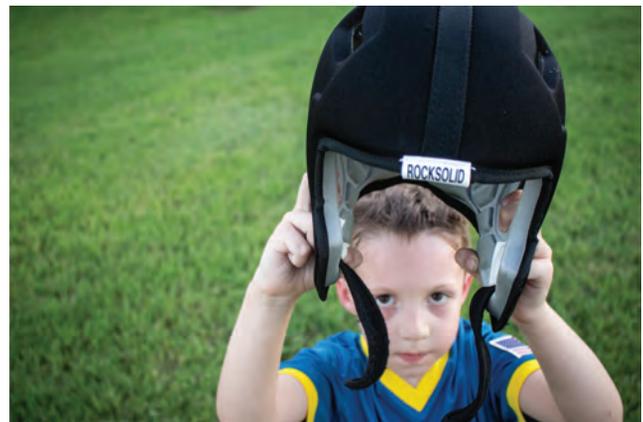


# CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

This sheet has information to help protect your athlete(s) from concussion or other serious brain injury. Use this information at your athlete's games and practices to learn how to spot a concussion and what to do if a concussion occurs.

## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.



## HOW CAN I SPOT A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION?

Athletes who show or report any of the signs or symptoms listed below– or simply say they just “don’t feel right” after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body– may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

### SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR COACHES:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent.
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall

### SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE:

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurred vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Confusion, concentration, or memory problems
- Just not “feeling right,” or “feeling down.”

## WHAT ARE SOME MORE SERIOUS DANGER SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR?

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 911 or take your athlete to the emergency room right away if they show any of these danger signs after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body:

- One pupil is larger than the other
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up
- A headache that gets worse and doesn't go away
- Slurred speech, weakness or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching).
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation.
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously.

## HOW CAN I HELP KEEP MY ATHLETE SAFE?

Sports are a great way for children and teens to stay healthy and can help them do well in school. To help lower your children's or teens' chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, you should do the following to help create a culture of safety for the team:

- Work with their coach to teach ways to lower the chances of getting a concussion.
- Talk with your athlete about concussion and ask if they have concerns about reporting a concussion. Talk with them about their concerns; emphasize the importance of reporting concussions and taking time to recover from one.
- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage your athlete to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

When appropriate for the sport or activity, teach your athlete that they must wear a helmet to lower the chances of the most serious types of brain or head injury. However, there is no "concussion-proof" helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for athletes to avoid hits to the head.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY ATHLETE HAS A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION?

As a parent, if you think your child or teen may have a concussion, you should:

- Remove your athlete from play the day of the injury.
- Your athlete should be seen by a health care provider and only return to play with permission from a health care provider who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.
- Ask your athlete's health care provider for written instructions on helping your athlete return to school. You can give these instructions to the school nurse and teacher(s), and return-to-play instructions to the coach and/or athletic trainer.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a health care provider should assess a child or teen for a possible concussion. Concussion signs and symptoms often show up soon after the injury. But you may not know how serious the concussion is at first, and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days.

The brain needs time to heal after a concussion. A child's or teen's return to school and sports should be a gradual process that is carefully managed and monitored by a health care provider.

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SOURCES: CDC's HEADS UP campaign. Customizable HEADS UP fact sheets were made possible through a grant to the CDC Foundation from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).