

Concussion and Mild Brain Injury

This fact sheet has information for parents, health professionals, sporting clubs and schools about concussion and mild traumatic brain injury. It can be used in conjunction with the Concussion infographic for kids and teens.

What is a concussion or mild traumatic brain injury?

- > A traumatic brain injury, sometimes called a TBI, is caused by a bump, jolt or hit to the head or body, that causes the brain to move within the skull. A concussion is a mild type of traumatic brain injury.
- > A concussion may or may not involve a loss of consciousness or lead to changes on a brain scan.
- > Children and adolescents recover differently to adults when they've experienced a concussion. Children and adolescents typically take longer to recover, and will need to return to activities gradually.
- > If managed appropriately, most symptoms of concussion and TBI spontaneously resolve within weeks but some people may experience ongoing symptoms which can affect their daily activities and quality of life.

What are the signs and symptoms of concussion?

Immediately following an injury, the child may be:

- > Appearing dazed or stunned
- > Repeating questions
- > Having problems remembering before or after the injury
- > Be confused about what happened
- > Showing changes in their personality or behaviour.



They may also display, or complain of:

- > Headache or "pressure" in the head
- > Dizziness and loss of balance
- > Nausea and/or vomiting
- > Numbness and/or tingling
- > Feeling tired or slowed down
- > Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- > Visual problems (e.g. double vision)
- > Drowsiness
- > Trouble sleeping
- > Not "feeling right"
- > Feeling more emotional than usual (e.g. sad or nervous)
- > Having trouble thinking clearly, concentrating or remembering things.



Signs and symptoms may not show up until 24-48 hours after the injury.



What to do immediately after the injury

If the child has any of the above signs or symptoms they should stop the activity they are doing and be assessed by a doctor.

First responders and GPs should use the Concussion Recognition Tool (CRT) or Sport Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT5) to assess the child.

If the child has seizures, or deteriorates with a worsening of symptoms such as headaches, vomiting, poor balance, dizziness or visual problems, then they should be taken to an Emergency Department.



What follow up care is required?

Allow the child to rest for 24–48 hours after the injury.

Next, slowly increase their activity levels without exacerbating symptoms, and start a stepwise return to school and sport.

It is important for the child and family to monitor and record symptoms and details of those activities that exacerbate symptoms.

See a GP for medical clearance for return to contact sport once the child is symptom free, and for assistance with managing symptoms such as headaches or pain.

If symptoms or difficulties with activity reintegration persist after 3-4 weeks, refer to a specialised service such as the Child & Adolescent Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service for individualised assessment and support.

Lifetime
S U P P O R T

For more information

Women's and Children's Hospital
Child and Adolescent Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service (CABIRS)
72 King William Road
North Adelaide SA 5006
Telephone: (08) 8161 7000
Email: Health.WCHNCABIRS@sa.gov.au
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