

\* This content is presented by the [Lerner Children's Pavilion](#).

## WHAT TO EXPECT:

**A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury.** A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt 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. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious.\*

### Concussion Facts:

- ❖ Most do not involve loss of consciousness.
- ❖ Symptoms may not appear immediately
- ❖ Early recognition & proper management can prevent further injury and complications

### Signs of a concussion that are usually observed by the parents or coaches:

- **Dazed or stunned appearance after a hard hit**
- **Confusion:** the child may appear to be confused about school assignments or position in the game, may be unsure of the score or opponent, may answer questions more slowly or inaccurately than usual
- **Forgetfulness:** the child may forget instructions or may not recall events prior to or after the hit
- **Changes in mood, behavior or personality**

### Symptoms reported by the athlete:

- **“Pressure in the head” or headache**
- **Balance problems**
- **Double or blurry vision**
- **Sensitivity to light and/or noise**
- **Feeling “in a fog”**
- **“Not feeling right”**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Memory problems**
- **Nausea/vomiting**
- **Sleeping more or less than usual**
- **Irritability or sadness**

## WHAT TO DO:

### Don't forget the Concussion ABC's

- A—Assess** the situation  
**B—Be** alert for signs and symptoms  
**C—Contact** a health care professional\*

**Remove the child from play immediately.** A child should never return to play the same day as their injury. When in doubt keep them out.

**Seek medical attention.** Tell your doctor how the injury occurred, if there was a loss of consciousness and for how long, if there was memory loss or seizures, and any history of concussion.

**Take time to recover.** The brain needs time to heal. While the brain is healing it is more likely to sustain a second concussion. Provide emotional support and academic accommodations, if appropriate, during their recovery period.

**Begin a gradual return to play.** Talk to a physician about gradual return to play protocols to safely return athletes to school and exercise once asymptomatic.

**Watch for danger signs:** headache that gets worse and does not go away, weakness, numbness or decreased coordination, repeated vomiting or nausea, slurred speech, one pupil larger than the other, convulsions or seizures, loss of consciousness

## HOW TO PREVENT:

**Safety first.** Report any possible concussion to school nurse, coach, athletic trainer and parents. The school and or league must be committed to safety regulations and keep injured athletes out of the game. Policies regarding concussions and return to play should be in place.

**Proper Equipment.** Protective equipment must be sized properly for each athlete. Ill-fitting equipment may do more harm than good.

**Baseline Testing.** Administer baseline cognitive testing at the start of the season for comparison if a concussion does occur. Athletes should not begin a return to play protocol until they have reached their baseline.

**Education.** Talk to young athletes about concussions. They should know the signs and symptoms of a concussion and consequences of playing while experiencing these symptoms. They should be encouraged to speak up if they suspect they might have had a concussion.

### Free on-line Concussion Training from the CDC:

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online\\_training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html)