



## Head Injury

Concussions are important conditions to consider following a head injury. Concussions may be difficult to detect initially, as symptoms may be delayed hours or days from the initial head injury. It is also important to note that increased risk of complications exists with subsequent concussions. Meaning, greater attention to onset concussion symptoms or complications should be made if a prior head injury or concussion has been sustained.

Common signs and symptoms of a concussion may include:

- Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Confusion or feeling as if in a fog
- Amnesia surrounding the traumatic event
- Dizziness or "seeing stars"
- Ringing in the ears
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Delayed response to questions
- Appearing dazed
- Fatigue

Some symptoms of concussions may occur immediately. Others may be develop over days:

- Concentration and memory complaints
- Irritability and other personality changes
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Sleep disturbances
- Psychological adjustment problems and depression
- Disorders of taste and smell

In younger children, symptoms may be more difficult to identify, rather than self-reporting symptoms, those around them may notice:

- Loss of balance and unsteady walking
- Irritability or changes in behavior

- Change in eating or sleeping patterns
- Lack of interest in favorite toys
- Consistent or worsening headache

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that you call your child's doctor for anything more than a light bump on your child's head. If there are no obvious signs or symptoms and you/your child remain alert and move normally, it is unlikely further assessment will be required. If signs and symptoms advance or change, it is important to contact your doctor again.

Seek emergency care anyone who experiences a head injury and symptoms such as:

- Repeated vomiting
- A loss of consciousness lasting longer than 30 seconds
- A headache that gets worse over time
- Changes in his or her behavior, such as irritability
- Changes in physical coordination, such as stumbling or clumsiness
- Confusion or disorientation, such as difficulty recognizing people or places
- Slurred speech or other changes in speech
- Seizures
- Vision or eye disturbances, such as pupils that are bigger than normal (dilated pupils) or pupils of unequal sizes
- Lasting or recurrent dizziness
- Obvious difficulty with mental function or physical coordination
- Symptoms that worsen over time
- Large head bumps or bruises on areas other than the forehead in children, especially in infants under 12 months of age

Athletes sustaining a head injury must have documentation from their doctor in order to return to athletic activities. Individuals may not participate in sports or PE when concussion symptoms are apparent and must be able to remain symptom free for 24 hours after activity to be released for activity.

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Mayo Clinic. (2017). Concussion. Retrieved from [www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/concussion/symptoms-causes/dxc-20273155](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/concussion/symptoms-causes/dxc-20273155)

Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich (2008), Br J of Sports Med 2009; 43: i76-i84 doi:10.1136/bjsm.2009.058248