

What is a Concussion?

A concussion happens when someone hits their head or gets hit in the head very hard. This causes the brain to bump against the inside of the skull. Concussions can make it hard to focus, balance, sleep, and more. This handout tells you more about concussion symptoms and caring for them.

Symptoms of a concussion

If your child gets hit in the head or hits their head very hard, they may have a concussion. Concussion symptoms can range from mild to very bad. **If your child had a head injury and has any of the following symptoms, please call their primary care doctor.** Some symptoms of a concussion are:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Blurred vision
- Double vision, which is looking at one thing but seeing two
- Confusion or memory loss
- Low energy
- Trouble sleeping or tiredness
- Difficulty remembering
- Trouble concentrating
- Reacting slowly
- Not wanting to be around bright lights
- Not wanting to be around loud noises
- Acting more angry, sad, or anxious than usual

How to care for a mild concussion

If your child has any symptoms of a concussion, you can care for them at home by:

- **Resting:** rest in a quiet, dark place for the **first 1 to 2 days** after the injury.
- **Visit their doctor:** your child should see their pediatrician **within 3 days** after the injury.
- **Follow the treatment guidelines:** follow any instructions your care team gives you.

When do I need to take my child to the Emergency Room?

If your child is having any of the following symptoms, go to the Emergency Room right away:

- Unconscious
- Feeling weak and very tired
- Slurred speech or trouble talking
- Really bad headache or long-lasting headache
- Trouble waking up
- Convulsions or seizures
- Significant neck pain
- Numbness or weakness in the arms or legs
- Falling, poor balance or difficulty walking

How to care for your child

Mental rest	Follow any instructions your care team gives you before your child can return to school. Often after 1 to 2 days of rest , your child can begin to return to school gradually.
Activities	Follow any instructions your care team gives you before your child can return to sports and activities. Usually after 1 to 2 days of rest , your child can try light-intensity cardio, like walking or stationary cycling, at a slow or medium pace.
Sleeping	Your child should try to sleep 8 to 10 hours each night. Keep a strict sleep schedule.
Drinking	Have your child drink more water. Your child should drink at least 2 to 3 times more water than they normally do.
Eating	Your child should eat meals and snacks regularly throughout the day.
Pain medicines	If your child has a headache, they can take pain medicines like Advil, Tylenol, or Aleve. Your child should not take pain medicine more than 2 days a week.
Spending time with family and friends	Your child can spend time with family and friends. They can do calm activities like talking or playing games together. This can help your child during their recovery.

Your child may take longer than normal to do their daily activities. Let them take as much time as they need, and don't ask your child to do tasks quickly. If your child has trouble remembering things, help them or remind them. Do not force your child to remember things. Be patient and understanding with your child. If your child gets frustrated or angry, give them time to calm down before talking to them about it.

The **Stanford Medicine Children's Health Concussion Program** is here to help your child safely return to school and sports after a concussion.

If you think your child has a concussion and would like them to be seen by a pediatric sports medicine doctor, or if you have any questions about their recovery, please call **(844) 41-ORTHO (67846)**.