



# When Your Child's Head Has Been Hurt:



A head injury can happen to anyone in every day life: at home, at school or in sports. Many children who hurt their heads get well and have no long-term problems.

- You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury.
- "Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a 'ding,' 'getting your bell rung,' or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.
- If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away."

(Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control Heads up [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion))

## HEALTH PROBLEMS

### Headaches

- headache that keeps coming back
- pain in head/neck
- pain below the ear
- pain in the jaw
- pain in or around the eyes

### Balance Problems

- dizziness
- trouble with balance

### Sensory Changes



- bothered by smells
- changes in taste or smell
- appetite changes



- feels too hot
- feels too cold
- doesn't feel temperature at all



- ringing in the ears
- hearing loss
- bothered by noises
- can't handle background noise

**If your child has any of these problems, see a doctor right away.**

- disoriented: loss of memory/amnesia
- nausea or vomiting that returns
- one pupil larger than the other
- headache that does not go away or get better
- seizures: eyes fluttering, body going stiff, staring into space
- hands shake, tremors, muscles get weak, loss of muscle tone

**For infants and toddlers:**

- all items already listed
- will not stop crying, can't be consoled
- will not nurse or eat

**A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI). All concussions are serious.**

### Sleep Problems

- can't sleep through the night
- sleeps too much
- days and nights get mixed up

### Pain Problems

- neck and shoulder pain that happens a lot
- other unexplained body pain

- blurry vision
- seeing double
- hard to see clearly (hard to focus)
- bothered by light



# BEHAVIOR and FEELINGS

( Changes in personality, mood or behavior )

- is irritable, anxious, restless
- gets upset or frustrated easily
- overreacts, cries or laughs too easily
- has mood swings
- wants to be alone or away from people
- is afraid of others, blames others
- wants to be taken care of
- does not know how to act with people
- takes risks without thinking first

- is sad, depressed
- is slow to respond
- is tired, drowsy
- takes off clothes in public
- has different sexual behavior
- eats too little, eats all the time, or eats things that aren't food
- trips, falls, drops things, is awkward
- starts using or has a different reaction to alcohol or drugs
- doesn't want to do anything, can't "get started"

- ✓ See a doctor
- ✓ Inform school of the injury
- ✓ Take time to recover
- ✓ Gradual return to learn/ school
- ✓ Cleared by a doctor before returning to play sports

## THINKING PROBLEMS

- has trouble remembering things
- has trouble paying attention
- needs more time to process information
- thinks slowly and reacts slowly
- takes things too literally, doesn't get jokes
- understands words but not their meaning
- thinks about the same thing over and over
- has trouble learning new things

- has trouble putting things in order (desk, room, papers)
- has trouble remembering to do things on time
- has trouble planning, starting, doing, and finishing a task
- has trouble making decisions
- makes poor choices



## TROUBLE COMMUNICATING

- changes the subject, has trouble staying on topic
- has trouble thinking of the right word
- has trouble listening
- has trouble paying attention, can't have long conversations
- does not say things clearly

Children and teens who show or report one or more of the signs and 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 more serious brain injury.

### Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

### Symptoms Reported by Athlete:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just "not feeling right" or "feeling down"

(Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/Concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/Concussion))

*It's better to miss one game than the whole season.*



TN Disability Coalition/Brain Links  
615-383-9442 888-643-7811  
<https://www.tndisability.org/brain>

TN Traumatic Brain Injury Program  
800-882-0611

<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/vipp/tbi.html>

TN Return to Learn/Return to Play:  
Concussion Management Guidelines

[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/Returning\\_to\\_Learn\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/Returning_to_Learn_Guidelines.pdf)

TN Sports Concussion Law Training & Resources

<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/vipp/tbi/tennessee-concussion.html>