

What's happening to my child?

This fact sheet has information for parents about what to expect if your child has experienced a concussion or mild traumatic brain injury.



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.

> Symptoms include headaches, poor sleep, dizziness, nausea, feeling tired, sensitivity to light or noise, problems with balance,

feeling foggy, poor concentration and difficulty thinking.

What happens straight after an injury?

- > Loss of consciousness can occur following a concussion, and is usually brief in duration, however not all children will lose consciousness.
- > Initially, some children may be confused or have a hard time forming new memories, and this typically resolves within the first 24 hours.
- > Not all children will develop the signs of concussion straight away, and symptoms may not become apparent until later or when they return to school or activities.
- > After your child is assessed by a doctor they may recommend that your child has a brain scan to rule out something more significant.



Recovery – what to expect

> This period can be a stressful time for children and their families who expect to be back to their normal abilities straight away.

> Children and teenagers have a slower recovery, and it's normal for symptoms to still be resolving within four weeks.

- > Certain risk factors associated with slower recovery are age (teenagers take longer to recover), high achievers, female gender, and children with a history of migraines, stress and or anxiety, or a recent history of concussion or head injury.

What can I do to help?

- > You can help by allowing your child to rest for the first 24-48 hours, before slowly reintroducing activities.
- > Talk to the school and sport clubs, let them know your child may temporarily be unable to meet all their requirements.
- > Get assistance from your GP to help manage symptoms such as headaches and pain.





When to get more help

- > Take your child to your GP or ED if they are deteriorating, or showing worsening signs of blurred vision, confusion, balance, dizziness, vomiting or headaches.
- > Take your child to see the GP and/or contact CABIRS if they haven't recovered at 3 to 4 weeks.

Remember:

- > The good news is that concussions resolve.
- > Not all children will have a loss of consciousness.
- > Children take longer to recover than adults.

Lifetime
SUPPORT

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
www.wch.sa.gov.au/cabirs

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