

## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?



***A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are significant***

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury. It requires medical care and followup. **You don't have to be knocked out to have had a concussion.** The injury may be mild, but it can affect your child's health, how your child thinks and does in school and how they get along with others.

**Many problems may appear in the first 24-48 hours after the concussion.** If your child has any of these problems, you should return to the Emergency Room or consult your doctor.

- headaches that worsen
- extreme sleepiness or trouble waking up
- seizures
- weakness or numbness in the arms or legs
- slurred speech
- repeated vomiting
- increasing confusion or irritability
- difficulty recognizing people or places
- neck pain
- loss of consciousness

## RESOURCES

For more information on concussions or to make an appointment at Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children, please contact:  
Division of Rehabilitation Medicine  
Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children  
Phone 302-651-5600  
Website: [www.Nemours.org](http://www.Nemours.org)

### DELAWARE RESOURCES

Brain Injury Association of Delaware  
Toll Free: 800-411-0505  
Website: <http://www.biausa.org/Delaware/bia.htm>  
Email: [biadresourcecenter@cavtel.net](mailto:biadresourcecenter@cavtel.net)

Parent Information Center of Delaware  
(Information pertaining to school issues)  
Serving families and professionals statewide.  
Toll Free: 888-547-4412  
Website: [www.picofdel.org](http://www.picofdel.org)  
Email: [picofdel@picofdel.org](mailto:picofdel@picofdel.org)

### NATIONAL RESOURCES

Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
Website: [www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm)

Brain Injury Association of America  
Website: <http://www.biausa.org>  
Family Hotline: 800-444-6443

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## Concussion in Kids and Teens A Guide for Parents

**Nemours**

Alfred I. duPont  
Hospital for Children

Nemours  
Children's Clinic

[Nemours.org](http://Nemours.org)



## WHAT TO WATCH FOR

While your child or teen may appear to be fully recovered soon after a concussion, it is important to understand that problems may still develop a few days later. Be on the lookout for the following types of changes:

### Physical Changes:

- continued headaches
- tired all the time
- changes in sleep patterns
- balance difficulties
- bothered by light or noise

### Thinking Changes:

- has trouble remembering
- has trouble paying attention
- has difficulty learning new things
- takes longer to think
- looks dazed or “in a fog”
- experiences a drop in school grades
- has trouble with reading comprehension

### Behavior/ Personality Changes:

- shows excessive irritability, sadness, or moodiness
- gets upset or frustrated more easily
- acts differently around others
- is slow to respond
- takes more risks/is impulsive
- wants to be alone more than usual

## WHAT TO DO NOW

**Ask your child how they feel throughout the day.** Keep in mind that young children may not recognize the symptoms and teens may not tell you because they want things to get “back to normal.” It’s important that you are observant and take note of any unusual behavior.

**Report what you observe to your doctor.** If, after the expected recovery time of 2-3 weeks, your child is not back to normal, ask to see a doctor that specializes in brain injury.

**Let people know.** It is important to tell others that your child had a concussion. Share this information with your child’s teacher, coaches, school nurse, counselor, principal and after school staff.

**Encourage rest.** Make time for your child to take daytime naps and breaks throughout the day.

**Avoid loud, bright and crowded environments.** Often the patient is sensitive to these and becomes uncomfortable.

**Avoid physical activities.** Your child/teen should avoid physical activities including gym class, competitive or contact sports, weight training, running, recess and bike riding, until cleared by your doctor.

**Limit activities that require a lot of thinking.** Your child may also have to attend school part-time, have reduced coursework or homework, get extra time for tests, decrease work hours and avoid driving.

## THE KEY IS REST AND REDUCED ACTIVITY IN THE FIRST SEVERAL WEEKS.

## RETURNING TO NORMAL ACTIVITY

Most young people will recover completely from a concussion in 2-3 weeks. However, some may continue to have problems beyond that time. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the possibility of having long-term problems.

**So, when can your child return to normal activity?** Your doctor or a brain injury specialist will guide the gradual return to daily activities- like school, work, active play and sports.

Some testing for memory and attention may be recommended. This can help determine if any problems with thinking have occurred. The assessment is not a medical procedure, but a screening to identify memory, concentration or cognitive difficulties that may have resulted from the concussion. This assessment helps to guide your child’s treatment plan and return to daily activities.

**Always consult your child’s doctor if you are not sure about when to return to an activity.** Any activity that could involve jarring or hitting the head again should be specifically cleared by your doctor.

For additional information see our list of resources on the back.



Once you have had one concussion, it is much more likely that there will be a second.

Remind your kids to ALWAYS wear proper equipment during physical activities... especially a helmet.