

Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Childhood Concussions

by Staci Jackson, M.A., CCC-SLP

A concussion is a specific type of brain injury that occurs when the brain is violently rocked back forth or twisted inside the skull. It can happen as a result of a blow to the head or the body during any type of sports or non-sports related activity. It's estimated that 80 to 90 percent of concussed kids will return to normal within two to three weeks. During recovery, children may need support from parents teachers, and coaches to deal with school work and and help cope with difficult emotions.



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls are the number one cause of head injuries in children under nine. Head injuries affect between 1.6 and 3.8 million children in America each year. Most of these can be classified as concussion. Children under four and young athletes are at the greatest risk for concussion.

While concussions in children can be scary, knowledge about symptoms and prevention is important for parents, teachers, and coaches.

While not all concussions are preventable, these basic safety strategies can help.



- Insist that your child wear a helmet when riding a bike, skating, skiing, skateboarding, and sledding.



- Use safety gates across open stairways.
- Use non-skid mats in bath tubs.
- Use guards on windows.



- Make sure your child consistently wears and uses the right protective sports equipment that it is properly fitted and maintained.
- Get youth athletics programs in your community involved with the CDC's *Heads Up* program, a free resource that provides educational materials about concussion and concussion prevention.

Finally, if you suspect your child may have a concussion, seek medical attention right away. Whether on the playground or sports field, a child should not return to play without a medical evaluation. While most concussions are not serious and complete recoveries are expected, it is best to let a medical professional determine your child's status.

Symptoms can vary but some of the most common are:



- **headache**
- **balance problems**
- **confusion**
- **nausea and vomiting**
- **dizziness**
- **vision changes**
- **numbness or tingling**
- **difficulty sleeping**
- **fatigue**
- **sensitivity to light**
- **slurred speech**

Resources:

General Information for Parents and Educators on TBI. (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2016, from http://www.brainline.org/content/2010/06/general-information-for-parents-educators-on-tbi_pageall.html

16 things about concussion parents need to know. (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2016, from <http://www.brainline.org/content/2014/05/16-things-about-concussion-parents-need-to-know.html>

A fact sheet for parents [Fact sheet]. (2010, May). Retrieved March 15, 2016, from http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/schools/tbi_factsheets_parents-508-a.pdf

Willets, M. (n.d.). Children's head injuries: 11 things parents need to know. Retrieved from <http://www.parenting.com/toddler/health/childrens-head-injuries-11-things-every-parent-needs-to-know>

Duff, M. (2009, September 3). Young Athletes and Concussions: Care Tips for Parents, Educators, and Athletes [Transcript] [Blog post]. Retrieved from The ASHA Leader Blog: <http://blog.asha.org/young-athletes-and-concussions-care-tips-for-parents-educators-and-athletes-transcript/>

For more FREE Handy Handouts®, go to www.handyhandouts.com