

Infant and Toddler Concussion Guide



Signs & Symptoms

Concussion can be harder to spot in babies & young children. Important symptoms to look out for after a head injury are changes in their normal behavior after a head injury, such as:

RED FLAG SIGNS – CONTACT YOUR PROVIDER OR CALL 911

- Large bump, bruise, or swelling on the head
- Blood or clear fluid from ears or nose
- Repetitive motions that look like seizures or eyes to one side
- Unable to console or calm
- Unable to wake up
- Persistent vomiting
- Worsening symptoms

MOOD

- Irritability or excessive crying
- Difficult to calm or console
- Behavior changes
- Loss of interest in their favorite activities
- Looking like they are daydreaming or “not there”
- Changes in mood—irritable, sad, emotional, nervous

PHYSICAL

- Crying when you move the baby's head
- Saying their head hurts or holding head & making a face
- Dizziness or more stumbling when walking – unable to go smoothly from position they were previously able to (ie. Rolling, pulling to stand, sit to stand)
- Sensitivity to light, sound, noise, touch, movement
- Refusing to nurse or eat/drink

SLEEP

- Sleeping changes
- Sleeping more or less
- Drowsiness
- Difficulty sleeping

THINKING

- Trouble concentrating
- Confused or cannot remember recent events
- Slow to answer questions

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury caused by a hard bump or hit to the head, or a blow to another part of the body that forcefully shakes the head. When this impact is powerful enough to cause the brain to move inside the skull, a concussion may occur.



WHEN TO CALL 911

Go to the Emergency Room if you are worried and/or if your child is showing worsening symptoms, will not stop crying, complaining of or appearing to have head pain, vomiting, increased confusion, seizures or “having a fit”, blood or fluid from ears or nose, difficulty staying awake or answering simple questions—or if you think your child's neck was injured.



What to Do (Early On)

- **Children may not show symptoms until hours or days after the injury. Have your child avoid play that is too active or rough until your doctor says it is safe.**
- Your child's nervous system is still developing. Symptoms of their head injury may show up weeks or even months later. It's important to find a care provider who knows about child development.
- Give the brain time to heal with both mental and physical rest. **Keep your child calm and limit TV and screen time.**
- Call your child's healthcare provider to **tell them about the injury to your child's head** and find out signs to watch out for. Your child should be monitored for symptoms for at least 2-3 weeks.
- If possible, keep your child home with you for 48 hours or more before returning to school or daycare. **Extra supervision after a concussion is very important!**
- **Do not use ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) for the first 48 hours. Ibuprofen should never be used in babies under 6 months.** You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) to help with pain if approved by your child's healthcare provider.
- Your child may be tired and need more sleep, especially the first few days. ***If your child can't be woken up, call 911 immediately.***
- **Keep the normal sleep/nap schedule.**
- Make sure your child drinks enough water and eats healthy foods to encourage brain healing.
- Your child should play quietly for at least the first 24 hours with NO highly active play (e.g., NO running, fast action, rough play, running or jarring motions, scooters or bikes). A second concussion while the brain is healing can be very dangerous.

Preventing Head Injuries

Children should play in safe spaces while actively **supervised by a responsible adult.**

• **NEVER** leave your baby unattended on surfaces (eg. Changing table, countertop)

NEVER place your baby in a car seat or a baby swing on a countertop or table

• Children must **ALWAYS** be in the **correct car seat** for their size and age when in the car, even for short trips!

Your child should **ALWAYS wear a helmet** and other protective gear during activities.

• **NEVER leave** your child alone or with siblings in a **bath or pool area**, even for a few seconds!

Make your home safe with outlet protectors, window guards, gun locks, and other safety items.

• Move furniture away from windows that children can fall through. Keep in mind that a window screen will **not** prevent a fall.

