

# Concussions

## What you need to know



### What is the law?

**Schools:** House Bill 284, the Return to Play Act of 2013, requires all public and private schools to create a concussion policy that, at a minimum, includes these standards:

- Prior to the beginning of each athletic season, an information sheet that informs parents or legal guardians of the risk of concussions must be provided.
- If a youth athlete (ages 7 to 18) participating in a youth athletic activity exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion, he must be removed from play and evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- Before a youth athlete can return to play, he must be cleared by a healthcare provider trained in the management of concussions.

**Recreational Leagues:** HB 284 requires recreational leagues to provide an information sheet on the risks of concussion at the time of registration to all youth athletes' (ages 7 to 18) parents or legal guardians.

### What is a concussion?

It is a type of brain injury caused by trauma. It can be caused by a hard bump on or blow to or around the head, which causes the brain to move quickly inside the head. You do not have to lose consciousness to have a concussion. If a concussion is not properly treated, it can make symptoms last longer and delay recovery. A second head trauma before recovery could lead to more serious injuries.

### What are the signs and symptoms?

There are many signs and symptoms linked with concussion. Your child may not have any symptoms until a few days after the injury. Signs are conditions observed by other people and symptoms are feelings reported by the athlete.

#### Signs observed by others

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Shows behavior or personality changes

#### Symptoms reported by athlete

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Fuzzy vision
- Feeling foggy
- Concentration problems

For a full list of signs and symptoms visit [choa.org/concussion](http://choa.org/concussion).

### What should you do if you suspect a concussion?\*

- Do not let your child play with a head injury.
- Check on your child often after the injury for new or worsening signs or symptoms. If the symptoms are getting worse, take him to the nearest Emergency Department.
- Take your child to the doctor for any symptom of a concussion.
- Do not give your child pain medications without talking to your child's doctor.
- Your child should stop all athletic activity until his doctor says it is OK. Your child must stay out of play until he is cleared by a licensed healthcare provider.
- Educate your child on concussions and why he cannot play until the symptoms are gone. Your child will need a gradual return to school and activities.
- Tell your child's coaches, school nurses and teachers if he has a concussion.

***\*In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.***

### Warning signs

**Call your child's doctor right away if he has:**

- New signs that his doctor does not know about
- Existing signs that get worse
- Headaches that get worse
- A seizure
- Neck pain
- Tiredness or is hard to wake
- Continued vomiting
- Weakness in the arms or legs
- Trouble knowing people or places
- Slurred speech
- Loss of consciousness
- Blood or fluid coming from nose or ear
- A large bump or bruise on scalp, especially in infant younger than 12 months

### Where can I find more information?

Visit [choa.org/concussion](http://choa.org/concussion) for return to school and activities guidelines, educational videos and general concussion information.

*This is general information and not specific medical advice. Always consult with a doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns about the health of a child. This piece was created by the concussion team at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. ©2013 Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Inc. All rights reserved.*

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