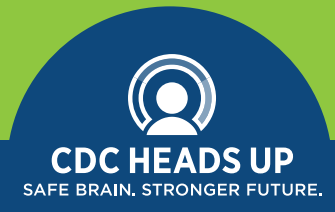




# Talking to parents and students about **concussion** and other head injuries



A fact sheet for physical education (PE) and student health teachers

## **You have the power to stop head injuries before they happen.**

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head — or a fall or blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth.

Adolescents have a higher risk of concussion because their brains are still developing. Concussions can have short- and long-term effects on their health.

Concussions have the biggest chance of happening during activities with collision risks, like physical education (PE) class or sports activities. But they can happen any time a student’s head comes into contact with a hard object, such as a floor, desk, or another student’s head or body. They can make it harder for students to do well in school and get good grades during their recovery, among other issues.

**Keep these talking points in mind when you’re communicating with other school professionals, parents, and youth. These tips can help to stop head injuries before they happen and prioritize concussion safety and prevention.**

**Talk to students about concussion safety.** Talk to students about concussion and brain injuries, including what they are and potential risks of not taking this injury seriously. Help students understand that concussions can interfere with their long-term goals.

**Encourage reporting.** Make sure students feel comfortable telling you when they get a head hit and don’t feel well. Encourage them to watch out for each other and report possible concussions from falls or head hits. Praise them when they do.

**Model safe behavior.** Follow and model sport-specific safe play rules and techniques. Make sure students have the right protective equipment for their activity.

**Get everyone on the same page.** Encourage parents, coaches, and others to prioritize concussion safety. Here are some talking points you can use with them:

- Tell parents that the student may need to see a healthcare provider experienced in concussion management.
- Give the parents a copy of the concussion signs and symptoms checklist for the healthcare provider to review.
- Follow up with the parents about when the student can return to school and to physical activity, based on medical instructions.
- Educate parents about concussion signs and symptoms, the potential long-term effects of concussion — including mental health problems — and the dangers of returning to activity too soon.
- Encourage parents to send students to talk with you if they observe, or even think, that a concussion happened.

Learn more about what you and your school team can do to help recognize or respond to concussions. By taking the right steps today, you can help young people reach their full potential **both on and off the field.**

