



## Post-play **check-in**

A step-by-step gameplan to **GUARD** your teen from concussion and other serious head injuries



A concussion is a serious brain injury that can change the way a young person's brain normally works. Children and teens can get a concussion from a bump, blow, or jolt to the head — or a fall or hit that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Many head injuries among children happen during sports and recreational activities. You have an **important role** to play in lessening the chances of a concussion or other serious head injury during these activities.

**G U A R D**

your teen from concussion using these steps:

**G**ear up with the right safety gear

**U**nderstand the signs and symptoms

**A**sk your child about signs and symptoms they're experiencing

**R**espond and take action after a possible concussion

**D**octor's evaluation after a possible concussion

You can **GUARD** your teen against ongoing symptoms and health problems from a concussion by taking these steps. You have the power to keep them healthy, strong, and safe from concussion.

## G

**Gear up.** Make sure that your teen wears the right safety gear and that their play or sporting area is safe from potential dangers. No safety gear or helmet is concussion-proof. But wearing a helmet for activities like biking, skating, scooting, and riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) is an easy and important way to lower the chance for a severe head or brain injury. More expensive safety gear does not guarantee safety — it needs to meet safety standards. Check with your teen’s sports league or school about programs offering reduced cost or free helmets and other equipment.

## U

**Understand.** Know the signs and symptoms of concussion. Look for any of the following signs and symptoms if your teen has experienced a bump or blow to the head, or a fall, during sports or recreational activity.

### Signs you might notice:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about position, game, score, or opponent
- Forgets an instruction
- Moves in a clumsy way
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to or after bump, blow to head, hit, or fall

### Symptoms they might talk about:

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Feeling sick to their stomach or nauseous
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Problems with concentration or memory, or feeling confused
- Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

### Danger Signs:

If your teen shows any of the following danger signs, call 911 and get emergency care right away:

- Drowsiness or inability to wake up
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- One pupil is larger than the other
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Unusual behavior

## A

**Ask.** Some signs and symptoms of concussion can be easy to miss. Keep a close eye on your teen after any hits, bumps, or blows to the head, especially after a fall or collision. Ask them things like:

- Did you hit or bump your head or fall down while playing today?
- Were you wearing a helmet?
- Are you feeling dizzy, sick to your stomach, confused, or bothered by light and noise?
- Can you tell me a story about playing today? What happened from start to finish?

## R

**Respond.** Take action if your teen reports any of the signs and symptoms above after a fall or hit to the head. Remove them from sports participation for the day if they got a possible concussion. Do not judge the injury yourself. Only let your teen return to sports until a healthcare provider says it’s OK to return.

## D

**Doctor’s Evaluation.** Contact your teen’s regular healthcare provider as soon as possible, if they have a regular provider. If they don’t, you can use this tool to find a low-cost community clinic. Tell the doctor about their injury, any signs and symptoms, and if they have had a concussion in the past. Their doctor will guide you on what you should do next.