Nursing Notes



**March is Brain Injury Awareness Month**

Skiing, snowboarding, basketball, swimming, football, cheerleading, bicycling, roller-blading, and even jumping on the bed are among the many activities youth engage in where there is a risk of brain injury.

Concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head that can change the way the brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth.

Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity. All coaches, parents and students should know the signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs.

Symptoms of a concussion may include:

* Nausea
* Dizziness or balance problems
* Double or fuzzy vision
* Headache
* Sensitivity to light or noise
* Feeling sluggish or tired
* Confusion
* Trouble concentrating or remembering

Parents and caregivers may notice additional concussion symptoms:

* Appears dazed or stunned
* Forgets an instruction
* Moves clumsily
* Shows behavior or personality changes
* Is unsure of game, score or opponent
* Can’t recall events before or after hit or fall

When a concussion is suspected, seek medical attention right away. A health care provider will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe to return to sports and recreation activities. Children who return to sports and activities too soon risk a greater chance or having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause permanent brain damage.

To prevent a concussion, ensure youth follow the rules, whether they’re the rules of the game or the rules of the road. Make sure children wear the right protective equipment for their activity such as helmet, padding, eye and mouth guards or shin guards. Parents should learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion, and shouldn’t hesitate to keep their child out of a sports game or activity after a concussion. Remind children that it’s better to miss a game or two than the whole season.

**\*\*\*Option to cut here, but include the last paragraph with the citation and reference to contact the school nurse**

Concussion recovery takes time, and varies significantly person to person. While some students may be able to return to academic work and physical activity after a short time, it may take others weeks or months. Parents and caregivers of children who have had a concussion can help them recover by taking an active role in their recovery:

* Having the child get plenty of rest. Keep a regular sleep schedule, including no late nights and no sleepovers.
* Making sure the child avoids high-risk/ high-speed activities such as riding a bicycle, playing sports, or climbing playground equipment, roller coasters or rides that could result in another bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Children should not return to these types of activities until their health care professional says they are well enough.
* Giving the child only medications that are approved by the pediatrician or family physician.
* Talking with their health care professional about when the child should return to school and other activities and how the parent or caregiver can help the child deal with the challenges that the child may face. For example, your child may need to spend fewer hours at school, rest often, or require more time to take tests.
* Sharing information about concussion with parents, siblings, teachers, counselors, babysitters, coaches, school nurses and others who interact with the child helps them understand what has happened and how to meet the child’s needs.

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Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

For more information, contact the school nurse.

Stay Healthy,

Sue