

# Fact Sheet

## Mild head injury and concussion



The term concussion describes the clinical condition resulting from injury to the brain and can be observed following a mild head injury. Early on this may involve altered levels of consciousness, headache, confusion, dizziness, memory loss of events surrounding the injury and visual disturbance.

Most children with a mild head injury make a full recovery but symptoms such as tiredness and mild behavioral changes may persist for up to 2-3 months. Please read this carefully so that you are aware of the signs that may indicate the need for further assessment.

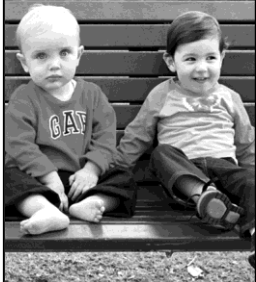


### In the first 48 hours...

Report immediately to your local medical practitioner or the nearest Emergency Department if any of the following symptoms occur:

1. Persistent vomiting
2. Excessive drowsiness
3. Worsening headache
4. Severe dizziness
5. Unsteady when walking
6. Increasing confusion, restlessness and agitation
7. Slurred speech
8. Convulsion or seizures

Phone your local doctor or in an emergency dial 000 for an ambulance.



### In the coming weeks...

Initially you or your child's teacher may notice some changes in your child's behavior and/or ability to concentrate and understand information at home or at school.

*Note: Children often fatigue quickly after a head injury and this can exaggerate any of these symptoms.*

#### Physical

- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Poor coordination
- Clumsiness
- Noise sensitivity

#### Behaviour/Emotions

- More demanding and easily frustrated
- More fearful and anxious
- Changed sleep patterns
- Irritability
- Mood swings

#### Cognitive

- Slowness with thinking
- Problems with concentrating
- Memory difficulties

#### Return to school

It is important to let the school know about your child's recent injury. If your child is experiencing fatigue, rest is important and consideration should be given to return to everyday activities gradually.



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After your child has been back at school for one month, we suggest you talk with the teacher about whether there are ongoing changes in your child's performance since the head injury. Any concerns should be discussed with your GP or the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program listed below.

### Return to sport

Your child should return to contact sports only after all symptoms have resolved.

Contact sports include:

- Tackle football
- Soccer/hockey
- Basketball/netball
- Horse riding
- Motorbike/BMX riding

### YOUR CHILD SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER TO WEAR THEIR HELMET

It is important to encourage gradual return to physical activity. Encourage your child's participation in gentle activities such as the following:

- Swimming
- Walking
- Stationary cycling
- Practice of ball skills
- Tennis
- Cricket
- Dancing

If you have any concerns or your child is experiencing any symptoms (see over) after one month please contact the Coordinator of the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program at the following Hospitals. They will be able to give you advice and refer your child to your local service.

Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick - 02 9382 1590

The Children's Hospital at Westmead - 02 9845 2132

John Hunter Children's Hospital Newcastle - 02 4925 7963

Or go to the following website for a link to your local service: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/birp/](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/birp/)

### REMEMBER

If you have any concerns about your child after a head injury, you should contact your GP, your local Emergency Department or your local Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program.

This fact sheet is for education purposes only.  
Please consult with your doctor or other health professional  
to make sure this information is right for your child.

*This document was last reviewed on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011*  
The next date of review for this document is 25<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

the  
children's  
hospital at Westmead

[www.chw.edu.au](http://www.chw.edu.au)

 **SYDNEY  
CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL  
RANDWICK**

[www.sch.edu.au](http://www.sch.edu.au)

  
Kaleidoscope  
HUNTER CHILDREN'S HEALTH NETWORK

[www.kaleidoscope.org.au](http://www.kaleidoscope.org.au)