

## Mild Traumatic Brain Injury

(Concussion and school excuse)

### What is mild traumatic brain injury?

A mild traumatic brain injury is also called a concussion. It is a brain injury caused by a bump or blow to the head. Often, the person “looks” fine, but still has problems functioning.

### What symptoms are common after a mild traumatic brain injury?

Physical		Emotional
Headache	Vision problems	Crabby or angry
Nausea/vomiting	Feeling more tired	Sad or upset
Balance problems	Bothered by light or noise	Nervous or anxious
Dizzy	Hands and face feel numb	More emotional
Mental		Sleep
Memory problems		Tired or sleepy
Hard time focusing		Trouble falling asleep
Slow or foggy thinking		Sleeps less or more than usual

### When should I go back to the ER or call my doctor?

**If your child does not respond or won't wake up, call 911 right away.**

Go to the ER right away if these symptoms start. Tell the ER staff that your child has had a recent head injury.

- Headaches that get worse.
- So sleepy they won't wake up.
- Doesn't recognize people or places.
- Weak or numb arms or legs.
- Seizures.
- Repeated vomiting.
- Slurred speech.
- Very crabby (irritable).
- Neck pain.
- More confused.
- Change in behavior.
- Doesn't respond like normal.

### How is it treated?

- Rest and sleep is one of the most important ways to get better.
- Naps are often needed. No late nights or sleepovers.
- Waking your child during the night is not needed.
- Your child needs to be seen by a primary care doctor in the **next week** for a re-check. Take medicine as ordered and use an ice pack on your child's head and neck for comfort.

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## Are there things my child should not do?

- **Do not take part in high risk activity.** This includes sports and gym. This also includes any activity where you could injure your head again, such as climbing, riding bikes or skateboarding.
- **Don't push through your symptoms.** Symptoms like headache and tiredness are your body telling you to take a break. Listen to your body and rest when you start to have worse symptoms.
- **Activity that can make symptoms worse:**
  - **Physical activity-** Exercise, strength training, and sports training
  - **Mental activity-** Things like homework, job-related work and long periods of video game playing are not good.
- Do not drive if there are any symptoms.
- Do not drink alcohol.

## What about school?

Let the school staff know about your child's injury. Your child should stay home and rest until symptoms get better. Being able to focus for at least 30 to 45 minutes without symptoms is important before going back to school. While at school, rest breaks can help if there are mild symptoms. The extra rest breaks at school can slowly be stopped as symptoms get better.

Students who have symptoms may need extra help with school work. **School staff should watch for symptoms that get worse, such as:**

- Having trouble paying attention, focusing, remembering or learning new information.
- Needing more time to finish tasks.
- Having a hard time coping with stress.
- Being more crabby than normal.
- Problems taking tests.

Talk to your doctor if your child is having problems with things at school after the injury.

## When can my child return to sports and other activities?

**Your child must be seen by your doctor to return to sports or other physical activities.**

Tell the gym or PE teacher and all coaches about the injury and symptoms. Your child will need managing activities. Parents, teachers, coaches, and athletic trainers can help prevent another head injury.

- It is normal for your child to feel upset and angry about missing sports or activities. A full recovery will lower the chances of getting hurt again after a head injury. Missing a game is better than the whole season.
- Once symptoms are gone for 24 hours and your child is back at school without extra rests, check with your doctor to see about returning to activity.

**Returning to sports and activities needs to be done in a slow and step-by-step way.**

Follow the chart below. This is the only safe way for your child to get back to full activity.

<b>Step-by-step Return to Activity / Play</b>
<b>1. No activity. Rest until symptom free for at least 24 hours</b>
2. Light aerobic exercise (e.g., light jogging, swimming)
3. Sport-specific training (e.g., weight training)
<b>The following should not be done until the health care provider says it is ok:</b>
4. Non-contact drills
5. Full-contact drills
6. Game play

**Before contact sports start, your child must be re-checked by a health care provider.**

If symptoms return with activity, stop and start back at step 1 (see chart below). See your doctor.

A visit at the CHW Concussion Clinic is recommended for children 10 years old and older who:

- Are athletes.
- Have had multiple concussions or head injuries in the past.
- Have symptoms that last more than 7 days.

The clinic can do a neurocognitive evaluation and help you make a plan for you child's care. To make an appointment, call Central Scheduling at (414) 607-5280 or toll-free (877) 607-5280. Call your primary care doctor for a referral before you make any special appointments.

**Other helpful resources:**

- [www.wiaawi.org](http://www.wiaawi.org)
- [www.wisportsconcussion.org](http://www.wisportsconcussion.org)
- [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

This information is adapted from the ACE (Acute Concussion Evaluation). Information produced by G.Gioia, PhD & M. Collins, PhD of Children's National Medical Center (2006), University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and the Center of Disease Control and Prevention

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/ACE\\_care\\_plan\\_school\\_version\\_a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/ACE_care_plan_school_version_a.pdf)

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

- **If you can't reach your doctor, call the ER with any questions at (414) 266-2626.**

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**

## Concussion: School excuse

\_\_\_\_\_ was seen for a concussion or mild traumatic brain injury. Both physical and mental rest is needed. Too much physical and mental activity can make symptoms worse and recovery longer. As symptoms get better, a slow and careful return to daily activities can be planned. **No sports or physical activity can be done at this time. This means no PE class, resistance training, contact sports, or physical activity during recess. This needs to continue** until there are no symptoms at rest and a health professional has cleared them for activity.

Students will need help from parents, teachers and coaches as they return to school and activities. Many people with a concussion cannot listen to music, text message, read or play video games without symptoms. **Rest and breaks will help the student recover the most.**

Staff Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Returning to School Key Points:

- Students with symptoms will need help with school work. Written instructions and extra time should be given for all assignments. As symptoms decrease, this help may be slowly removed.
- Computer classes, the lunchroom and loud classes (like band & music) may make symptoms worse.
- Once symptoms are gone at rest and schoolwork is done without help, a health professional will need to clear the student to return to activity. When this happens a gradual return to play will be needed. Parents and the student will have a specific chart with the steps for returning to sports.
- No recess or gym (PE) class until cleared by a healthcare professional.

Please be aware that these are possible concussion symptoms:

Physical		Cognitive	Emotional	Sleep
Headache	Visual Problems	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Drowsiness
Nausea/Vomiting	Fatigue/ Feeling tired	Feeling slowed down	Sadness	Sleeping less than normal
Dizziness	Sensitive to light or noise	Having a hard time remembering	More emotional	Sleeping more than normal
Balance Problems	Numbness	Having a hard time concentrating	Nervousness	Trouble falling asleep

### Until full recovery these supports may help students as they return to school:

Shortened days.	Less homework.
Shortened classes.	No significant classroom or standardized testing.
More time to complete work and tests.	Rest breaks during the day as needed.

**ALERT:** Call the child's parent, doctor, nurse or clinic if you have any questions or concerns.