



Assess the situation

Be alert for signs and symptoms

Contact a health care professional

A Fact Sheet for OBGC Parents

What is a concussion?

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. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can be serious.

Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be addressed correctly.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after an injury or may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury. It is important to watch for changes in how your child or teen is acting or feeling, if symptoms are getting worse, or if s/he just "doesn't feel right." Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

If your child or teen reports one or more of the symptoms of concussion listed, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away. Children and teens are among those at greatest risk for concussion.

Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion

Observed by Parents or Guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Appears unsteady/off balance
- Seizures/convulsions
- Excessive drowsiness
- Is confused about events
- Answers questions slowly
- Repeats questions
- Appears irritable or emotional
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Forgets class schedule or assignments
- Can't recall events prior to or after the hit, bump, or fall

Symptoms Reported by Your Child

Thinking/Remembering:

- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Feeling more slowed down
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy

Physical:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling

Emotional:

- Irritable
- Sad
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous

Sleep:

- Drowsy
- Sleeps less than usual
- Sleeps more than usual
- Has trouble falling asleep

MedStarSportsMed.org/OBGC

MedStar Health and the Olney Boys and Girls Club
Partnering to promote best practices in:
Injury Prevention and Management
Performance Improvement

Children and teens with a concussion should NEVER return to sports or recreational activities on the same day the injury occurred. They should delay returning to their activities until a healthcare professional experienced in evaluating for concussion says it's OK to return to play. This means, until permitted, the child/teen should not return to:

- Physical Education (PE) class,
- Sports practices or games,
- Physical activity at recess,
- Going to the gym,
- Playing sports/working out at home.

Be on the Lookout for these Danger Signs

Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. **If your child shows one or more of the signs listed, we recommend they be seen at the most convenient Emergency Department.**

- One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other
- Drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- Severe or increasing headache
- Weakness or tingling in the arms or legs
- Decreased coordination
- Mid-line cervical tenderness
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

What should I do if my child or teen has a concussion?

1. Seek medical attention right away. A health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion can determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child or teen to return to normal activities, including physical activity and school (concentration and learning activities).

2. Help them take time to get better. If your child has a concussion, her or his brain needs time to heal. Your child may need to limit

activities while s/he is recovering from a concussion. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games may cause concussion symptoms (such as headache or tiredness) to reappear or get worse. After a concussion, physical and cognitive activities—such as concentration and learning—should be carefully managed and monitored by a health care professional.

3. Together with your child learn more about concussions. Talk about the potential long-term effects of concussion and the dangers of returning too soon to normal activities (especially physical activity and learning/concentration). For more information about concussion and free resources, visit: www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

How can I help my child return to school safely after a concussion?

Help your child get needed support when returning to school after a concussion. Your MedStar Concussion Specialist will help guide you through safe return following concussion. Children who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed,
- Spend fewer hours at school,
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments,
- Receive help with schoolwork, and/or
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer.

What are my child's options for evaluation and treatment?

To access the MedStar Sports Medicine concussion specialists, we advise one of the following options:

- Call **301-570-7415** Monday through Friday from 8:00AM-4:30 PM to schedule an appointment with one of our MedStar Sports Medicine concussion specialists on the MedStar Montgomery Medical Center Campus.
- Call **888 44 SPORT** (1-888-447-7678) Monday through Friday from 8:00AM-6:00 PM for regional access to MedStar Sports Medicine concussion specialists closest to you.
- Go to the **MedStar Montgomery Medical Center's (MMMC) Emergency Room** if you seek access to a concussion evaluation outside normal business hours. 18101 Prince Philip Drive, Olney.

*After initial treatment, wherever provided, it is highly recommended that your child continue follow-up care with a concussion specialist. This can be coordinated through MedStar Health at the time of your first visit or you can schedule an appointment by calling **888 44 SPORT** (888 447 7678). You and your child will be guided through post-concussion follow-up care by MedStar Health experts to promote safe and effective return to play and school.*

NOTE: If your child has one or more of the "Danger Signs" listed, we recommend you take them to the most convenient emergency department.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!