Concussions are caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. (Adapted from the CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html)

- headache that keeps coming back
- pain below the ear
- pain in the jaw
- pain in or around the eyes
- dizziness
- trouble with balance
- changes in taste or smell
- appetite changes
- too hot/ cold
- ringing in the ears
- bothered by noises
- can’t handle background noise
- vision changes
- bothered by light

If you have any of these problems, see a doctor right away!

DANGER SIGNS

- nausea or vomiting
- one pupil larger than the other
- headache that does not go away
- seizures, eyes fluttering, body going stiff, staring into space
- loss of consciousness, even brief
- disoriented/ confused
- hands shake, tremors, muscles get weak, loss of muscle tone

A Concussion is a Type of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

All Concussions Should Be Taken Seriously.

A Head Injury Can Happen to Anyone at Any Age at Any Time.

WHAT TO DO:

Seek help & referrals.

Treatment for concussion is available. Your doctor may refer you to:

- Neurologist
- Neuropsychologist
- Specialized concussion center
- Brain injury rehabilitation center
- Specialist in your particular symptom

Brain Links materials are educational resources. Refer to a doctor for all healthcare needs.
Common Concussion Symptoms

**Cognitive/Communication**
- feeling dazed or in a fog
- slower to understand

**Emotional/Behavioral**
- irritability
- quick to anger
- decreased motivation
- cries easily

**Physical**
- headaches or neck pain
- changes in vision
- sleep changes
- fatigue
- balance/ dizziness
- bothered by light or sounds

**Signs of Pain**
- excessive crying
- anxious or agitated
- a lot of physical movement
- changes in breathing
- increased muscle tightness
- facial changes (tense or stressed)

Identifying a concussion can be more difficult in someone who communicates without words.

**Look for:**
- disrupted sleep
- stomachaches
- changes in eating habits
- decreased engagement, changes with things they once loved
- poorly controlled behaviors or behaviors that change quickly
- continence issues, bedwetting or uncontrolled bladder & bowels

**What Symptoms Might Look Like**
- covering, squinting or closing eyes
- changes in appetite, not eating favorite foods
- changes in sleep, night walking, not able to stay in bed for as long
- touching/ holding their head
- bothered by light or noises
- forgetting routines
- changes in any skill they already had
- more clingy/ emotional or withdrawn
- change in appetite or sleep
- more tantrums/ disruptive
- stomach issues

*This information is adapted from a study on very young children (3-5 years old) who often don’t have the words to describe their symptoms: Suskauer, S. J., Rane, S., Reesman, J., & Slomine, B. S. (2018). Caregiver-report of symptoms following traumatic brain injury in a small clinical sample of preschool-aged children. Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine, 11(1), 7-14. doi:10.3233/prm-160424*

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TN Traumatic Brain Injury Program
800-882-0611
https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/health/health-program-areas/fhw/vipp/tbi.html

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