

Concussion care

At Cook Children's, we know that diagnosing and treating head injuries in children and teens requires special skills and that is what sets our team apart. Our dedicated concussion team is here to help your child recover as quickly as possible.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that causes temporary changes in the way the brain works. Many people think concussions happen when someone is knocked unconscious while playing sports. However, concussions can happen without losing consciousness and not only while playing sports.

What causes a concussion?

Concussions happen when there is a hit to the body or head that causes the brain to move quickly back and forth. This risk is highest in contact sports.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of a concussion usually happen right away, but can show up hours or days after an injury. Signs and symptoms of a concussion may include:

- Being slow to answer questions
- Blurred or double vision
- Confusion or not remembering what happened
- Repeating statements/questions
- Headache
- Dizziness, balance problems or trouble walking
- Nausea or vomiting
- Emotional changes
- Slurred speech

A child who has had a head injury should go to the ER to rule out other serious head injuries in the case of:

- A severe headache or one that gets worse
- Loss of consciousness
- Other worrisome symptoms such as continued vomiting

How is a concussion diagnosed?

To diagnose a concussion, the health care provider will:

- Ask how and when the head injury happened
- Ask about symptoms
- Test memory and concentration
- Perform a physical exam testing balance, coordination and reflexes

Concussion testing

If a head injury happens while someone is playing sports, a coach or athletic trainer may do sideline concussion testing to determine if immediate medical care is required. **An athlete with a suspected concussion must stop playing immediately** and see a doctor before returning to play.

Many schools or sports leagues use baseline concussion tests. Baseline testing uses computer programs to test a player's normal brain function for attention, memory, speed of thinking and reaction time. Doctors compare testing after an injury with the baseline results to see how someone is recovering. ImPACT is an objective tool used at Cook Children's to support trained health care providers in making return-to-activity decisions following a concussion. ImPACT has two primary uses:

- Baseline testing: completed prior to sports participation to measure the athlete's neurocognitive performance baseline
- Post-injury testing: administered after a concussion and compared to baseline and/or normative data scores

How are concussions treated?

Treatment is determined based on individual symptoms and physical examination results.

When can athletes return to sports?

Student athletes must wait until their health care provider says it is safe before returning to sports. This means they must:

- Have had a physical exam
- Be back in school
- Have no symptoms
- Not be using any medications for concussion symptoms

Cook Children's concussion care locations

13340 Highland Hills Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76008
682-885-4405 phone

750 Mid Cities Boulevard
Hurst, TX 76054
682-885-4405 phone

801 Matlock Road
Mansfield, TX 76063
682-885-4405 phone

4200 West University Drive, #200
Prosper, TX 75078
682-303-4200 phone



Learn more about our sports concussion services.



View our clinical pathway for concussion care.