

PORTSMOUTH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Policy: Head injury and concussion

Reviewed on: 12/10/21

Approved by:

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce or twist within the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells. In schools, concussions most commonly happen during activities like physical education (PE) class, playground time, or school-based sports activities. Students may also get a concussion when doing activities outside of school. For example, a student may get a concussion from a fall at home or a motor vehicle crash. No matter where a concussion occurs, it is important to properly recognize and respond to a concussion to prevent further injury and to help with recovery

- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain.
- Most people who have concussions do not lose consciousness after the injury.
- Quick and correct response to concussions can help recovery and prevent further injury.
- Athletes who have had a concussion have a higher chance of getting another concussion. A repeat concussion can lead to more severe symptoms and a longer recovery.

Nurse to perform a concussion and musculoskeletal injury assessment (Note: this is **not** something that can be delegated and must be performed by a nurse)

Signs and Symptoms to monitor for:

- Severe head or facial bleeding
- Bleeding or fluid leakage from the nose or ears
- Black-and-blue discoloration below the eyes or behind the ears
- Severe headache
- Confusion, trouble thinking clearly
- Inability to concentrate
- Emotional variability
- Change in consciousness for more than a few seconds
- Agitation
- Nausea, vomiting
- Slowed or no breathing
- Loss of balance, dizziness
- Weakness or inability to use one side of the body
- Numbness, tingling
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Light or noise sensitivity
- Vision Changes
- Unequal pupil size

Signs to monitor for in Children:

- All symptoms listed for adults
- Bulging in the soft spot on the front of the head (infants)
- Refusal to eat
- Repeated vomiting
- Persistent crying

Students free of injury:

- 1) If a student is found to be free of injury they may return to class at the nurse's discretion. The student should be monitored for up to 30 minutes to assess for any symptom development.
- 2) A phone call or email to parents must be made to advise of the incident and advise of signs and symptoms to monitor for
 - Advise to monitor for several days post-injury
 - Advise student will need to be seen by a healthcare provider if symptoms listed above develop. Advise to call 911 if needed.

Students not free of Injury:

In rare cases, a concussion can lead to edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death. Call 9-1-1 or take the student to an emergency department right away if a student develops:

A headache that gets worse and does not go away; Significant nausea or repeated vomiting; Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation; Drowsiness or inability to wake up; Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination; Convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching); or; Loss of consciousness (passing out)

- 1) Nurse will assess the need for EMS vs. parental transportation
- 2) Nurse will remain with the student until they are transported off campus
- 3) Parents will be contacted and advised, this may be delegated if needed
- 4) Ask the parents to provide written follow-up guidance from the student's provider when they return to school, with specific limitations addressed (if any).
- 5) Children and teens with a concussion should NEVER return to sports or recreation activities on the same day they were injured. Be sure to remind coaches and others that the student should not return to PE class, playground time, or school-based sports activities until the healthcare provider who is managing his or her concussion gives permission to do so.

Helping the student return to school post-concussion:

1. Work with the student's parent and healthcare provider to determine the level of activity the student will be able to handle. Written documentation from the healthcare provider should be provided to the PCA Health Office.
2. Coordinate classroom accommodations with your student's teachers and other school professionals so that the student can have the same level of support throughout the school day.
3. If symptoms do not worsen during an activity, then this activity is OK for the student. If symptoms do worsen, the student should cut back on time spent engaging in that activity and may need additional support at school. If there are any symptoms that concern you or seem to be getting worse, notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) that the student should be seen by a healthcare provider as soon as possible.

All information obtained from the American Academy of Emergency Physicians

<https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/article/pediatrics/child-head-injury>

And the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[A Fact Sheet for School Nurses \(cdc.gov\)](#)