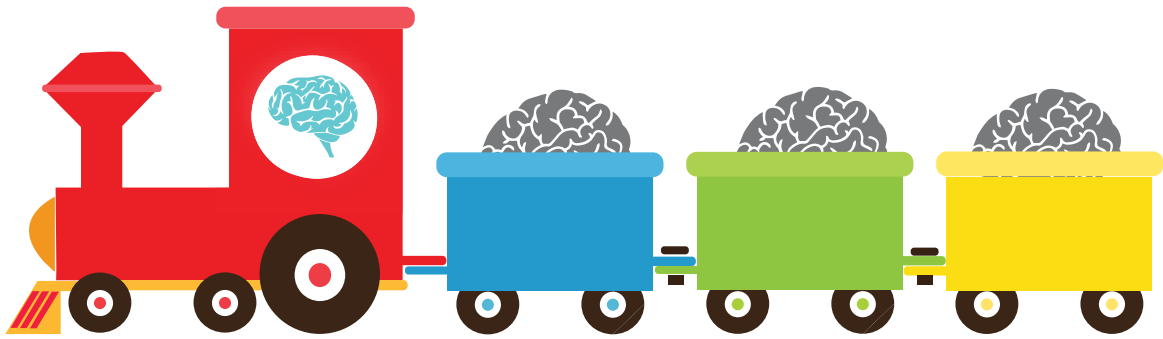


WHEN CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS ARE NOT GOING AWAY

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO ARE FIVE AND UNDER



HAS YOUR CHILD HAD A CONCUSSION?

If your child has a concussion, also called a mild brain injury, there are certain steps you should take to help ease their symptoms. Usually concussion symptoms will clear by three months. For most children, symptoms will go away in two to four weeks. However, some children have symptoms that last longer than three months.

Here are some steps you should take when your child has a head injury.

FIRST THING AFTER INJURY

- Go to the doctor or emergency department.
- Follow the doctor's care plan. Watch your child carefully for changes.
- Have your child rest for the first one to three days as needed.
- Get a doctor's letter stating that your child has a concussion (or mild brain injury).
- Give copies of the letter to all childcare teachers and the school nurse. Keep a copy for yourself.



FOR A CHILD AT HOME

A young child may not be able to tell you what is wrong.
Look for changes in their behavior such as:

Touching or holding their head

Bothered by light or noise

Forgetting routines

Changes in walking or rolling

Changes in grasping, feeding, or potty training

More clingy and crying

Less social

Changes in eating or sleeping

More tantrums or "bad" behavior

Stomach hurts

Keep track of all changes. Write them down. Quickly tell a medical professional.

FIRST FEW DAYS TO WEEKS AFTER INJURY

After three days, make sure your child does not rest too much or have too much activity. It is safest to find a balance.

FOR A CHILD IN DAYCARE OR AT PRESCHOOL

Daycare or preschool personnel should put the doctor's letter into your child's medical chart and school file. Even if your child seems well now, they may have problems later as their brain matures. As your child goes back to daycare or preschool, make sure to:

- Ease the child back into school. Start with half days.
- You should expect mild symptoms. Watch your child's symptoms closely. Your child's symptoms should not be extreme. If you are worried, trust your gut. Talk to a medical professional.
- Ask the teacher to make simple changes to help your child stay at school longer:
 - Rest with head down
 - Take "brain breaks" in a quiet room
 - Wear a hat or turn down the lights
 - Use earplugs
 - Use a comfort item like a blanket or stuffed toy
 - Nap as needed
- Have the teachers track your child's symptoms and tell you which changes are helping. Use different types of changes as needed.

It's VERY important to keep your child safe after concussion. While healing, their brain could be injured again. Talk to your doctor. Find out what activities your child can and cannot do.





“Bad” behavior is sometimes the first sign that a young child has had an injury. Your child may be frustrated or angry about changes. They may not have the words to explain these feelings. Be patient. Dig deeper. Try to find out if the difficulty is with their thinking, listening, or talking. Ask your child’s teacher for help.

FOUR WEEKS AFTER INJURY

Is your child still facing problems? If so, follow these steps.

IF YOUR CHILD IS BETWEEN ZERO AND THREE YEARS OLD

Talk to your doctor. Your child may need a referral to the Nebraska Early Development Network Referral Agency. Anyone can make a referral. Visit www.edn.ne.gov to make a referral or call Nebraska ChildFind at 1-888-806-6287 toll free.

AFTER YOUR CHILD’S THIRD BIRTHDAY

Contact your local school district’s Director of Special Education. Start with your school district’s Central Office. Follow these steps:

- Set up a test/evaluation to see if your child needs services.
- Help make an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if your child needs services. The local school district provides the services.
 - Is your child in kindergarten? If so, ask the school [in writing](#) to start the testing process for special services.
- If you are having difficulty finding a contact in your local school district, contact the Nebraska Department of Education office at 402-471-2295.

ONE OR MORE YEARS AFTER INJURY

Sometimes symptoms seem to get better quickly. Then problems may appear in school a year or more after your child’s head injury. The brain matures as children grow older. We do not use some skills until we are old enough to need them.

- Ask for testing by the school if your child is having any type of problem. This might include learning, behavioral, emotions, or thinking.
- Tell the teachers about your child’s injury each new school year. Ask them to look for any signs of difficulty. Talking with teachers ahead of time can prevent bigger problems.

In some areas there are special clinics that focus just on concussion symptoms. Talk to your doctor about whether these are right for your child.



Remember - You can speak up for your child. Trust your gut. Stay involved.

Watch symptoms over time. Update your child's doctor. Stay in contact with the school. Concussion symptoms are real. Symptoms indicate the brain is healing and needs time and supports at home and school.

THINGS TO WATCH FOR OVER TIME (CHECK THOSE THAT YOU SEE)

- Mood swings, gets mad easily and changes in personality
- Trouble with attention and thinking
- Memory problems, especially things that just happened
- Anxiety, depression or difficulty handling stress
- Headaches
- Behavior that doesn't fit the time, place or people (loud in a library)
- Poor sleep and feeling tired too easily
- "Bad" or unwanted behavior
- Later: Grades dropping, falling behind other kids

NOTE:

Every brain injury is different. There is no set time that recovery takes. If your child is school-aged (five plus), ask for the school-aged parent guide.

FREE RESOURCES

Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska

www.biane.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html

Center on Brain Injury Research and Training

www.cbirt.org

Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council

www.braininjury.nebraska.gov



www.biane.org



@BrainInjuryNebraska



This document was originally created by Brain Links and was reproduced with permission by Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska



Brain Links is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under Grant No. 90TBSG0024-01-00 and in part by the TN Department of Health, Traumatic Brain Injury Program.