

Concussion and Fall Awareness for Teens

ThinkFirst
GAYLORD CHAPTER

The CDC defines **concussion** as a mild 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 rapidly back and forth. This can cause chemical changes and damage to the brain cells leading to problems in all aspects of a teen's life.

Preventing falls starts with making safe and smart decisions. The more you know, the more you can do to keep yourself safe.

Falls can be caused by risky behaviors, effects of drugs/ alcohol, sports, and tasks or jobs involving work on ladders/roofs.

ACTION PLAN

- Think about the consequences of your actions
- Learn how drugs/alcohol effect your decision-making, judgement and insight
- Take the time to obtain the proper fitting sports equipment to adequately protect yourself
- Take all safety precautions seriously when needing to "go out on a limb" (ex. harness, proper footwear, spotter)

SYMPTOMS

- Cognitive: Trouble thinking, remembering, concentrating, easily distracted
- Sleep Cycles: Poor sleep, feeling overwhelmingly tired
- Physical: Headache, impaired balance, impaired vision/sensitivity to light, dizziness, change in appetite
- Emotional: Irritable, sad, nervous, depressed, anxious
- Social: Feeling withdrawn from friends/family, loss of interest in social events

FAST FACTS about Concussion



About **2.8 million**
traumatic brain injuries occur yearly

About
812,000
of those were
among children
age
17 years
and younger

Leading cause of
traumatic brain injuries in
kids/teens are
falls including
slipping, tripping,
stumbling, falls from one
level to another, down
stairs, hazards such as
sports equipment/bags left
on stairways, and ill-fitting
footwear

ThinkFirst
National Injury Prevention Foundation

 **Gaylord**
Specialty Healthcare

Steps to Recovery

1. **Rest** – Take it easy the first few days after injury; Limit physical activities and school work; Avoid activities that put you at risk for another hit to the head.
2. **Sleep** – Get a good night's sleep and take naps during the day as needed.
3. **Activity** – Start back with light activity to gradually returning to normal; Find relaxing activities at home; Avoid screen time and loud music; reduce daytime naps.
4. **School** – Return to school; Maybe attend for half days at first.

*When symptoms are mild, return to most of your regular activities, but take breaks or back off if concussion symptoms worsen.



POST-CONCUSSIVE SYNDROME

This is when concussion symptoms persist for months. Teens may need support services in school to help manage difficulty concentrating, light sensitivities, headaches, work load and test-taking environment.

Recovery

- Recovery from concussion is when a teen is able to do all the regular activities as prior without symptoms
- Follow up with PCP (primary care provider)
- Ask about medicines that are safe to take if headaches persist
- Limit the number of soft drinks/caffeine for optimal rest

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RESOURCES

www.aans.org – American Association of Neurological Surgeons

www.biausa.org – Brain Injury Association of America

www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion_what_is.html - See website for more information regarding specific ways to avoid injuries/concussions pertaining to each sport