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My child has a concussion.

What do I do now?

A concussion is a bruised brain. And just like a bruise on your arm or leg, it usually only needs some time to heal on its own. Unlike a regular bruise there are a few extra precautions to prevent making the injury worse and risking permanent brain damage.

Aren't concussions something that just happen to football players?

We often think of concussions as something that is more of a sports related injury. In many sports concussions are common. However, it is just as important to be aware that you can get a concussion in several ways and 90% of these do not involve losing consciousness. Any head injury has the potential to be a concussion and all of them need to be watch and treated with equal seriousness. **The follow symptoms should be looked for in the first few hours after a head injury.**

- Have a headache, especially if it progressively gets worse.
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Dizziness or unsteadiness with standing or walking
- Difficulty remembering things that happened before or after the injury.
- Trouble with concentration
- Changes in sleep (sleeping more or less than usual, being extra drowsy during the day)
- Emotional changes (being more irritable than usual, crying for no good reason)
- Doing things more slowly, almost like “being stuck in slow motion.”

It will typically take 1-2 weeks to fully heal from a concussion. Don't worry you don't have to keep them awake; this is an old medical myth. Nonetheless, for the first 10-12 hours you should wake them every couple of hours to ensure they aren't worsening.

How do you treat a concussion?

Most importantly, you need to rest your brain and your body. No physical exertion. Sleep is also important.

- 1) **Physical rest:** If any symptoms listed above are present, a person diagnosed with a concussion should avoid physical activity. This includes, PE, competitions, physical hobbies like bike riding and climbing. Anything that could cause further damage from a fall or hitting of the head. **OFF LIMITS.**
- 2) **Brain rest:** Limit video games, difficult homework, loud music, watching tv, using smartphones, etc, for the first few days.

Can my child still go to school?

Most of the time, yes. They should return when they can tolerate 30-45 minutes of mental work. (this includes watching TV or Texting on their phone.)

When can they play again?

Once they are totally free of symptoms. This means off medications to treat symptoms and be symptom free. They should first return to a full schedule of schoolwork. If this is tolerated, they should return to get a full work up and ensure that exercise will not exert them and re-damage the brain.

There is a big game, can't they just do this one thing?

NO! Re-injury is a much higher probability if the current injury is not yet healed. Second-impact syndrome can leave your child with permanent brain damage. **IT ISNT WORTH THE RISK.**

Visit www.kansasconcussion.org for more information.

MEMBERS: As always, your provider is just a phone call or text message away. It's better to be safe than sorry. Reach out if you are worried or if this protocol isn't helping.