

Understanding the Nature and Risk of Concussions

FACTS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES



WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

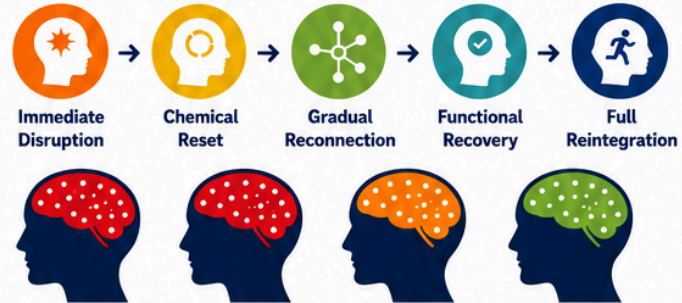
A concussion is a temporary disruption in how the brain functions — not a bruise and not visible on scans.

Sudden movement causes the brain to shift inside the skull, stretching and twisting delicate nerve fibers.

This leads to a **chemical imbalance** that disrupts how brain cells communicate.

Symptoms can include **headache, confusion, and sensitivity to light or noise.**

BRAIN RECOVERY PATHWAY



Healing takes time. A gradual return to activities helps the brain recover.

SUPPORTING RECOVERY



Short Rest

24–48 hours of relative rest.



Light Activity

Light movement and activities as tolerated.



School Adjustments

Temporary academic supports may be needed.



Good Sleep

Prioritize consistent, quality sleep.



Healthy Habits

Stay hydrated, eat well, and take breaks.



Step Back if Symptoms Return

Reduce activity and seek guidance.



Recovery is symptom-guided. If symptoms worsen, scale back and talk with a healthcare professional or school nurse.

WHY CONCUSSIONS MATTER

Concussions are more than “just a bump.” They affect how students think, learn, and feel.

If a child returns to school or sports too soon:

- The brain’s healing process can be interrupted, causing **longer recovery** and persistent symptoms.
- **Concentration and memory** may suffer, making schoolwork harder and frustrating.
- **Reaction time and coordination** slow, increasing the risk of another injury.
- A second concussion before full recovery can lead to **serious, lasting damage** — sometimes called **second impact syndrome**.



THE REAL RISKS FOR STUDENTS



Academic Strain: Trouble focusing or remembering lessons.



Emotional Stress: Feeling anxious, irritable, or isolated.



Physical Vulnerability: Returning to play too early increases the chance of another impact.



Cumulative Effects: Multiple concussions can lead to long-term challenges.

WHEN TO SEEK EMERGENCY CARE



Severe headache



Repeated vomiting



Slurred speech



Increasing confusion



Weakness or numbness



Any loss of consciousness



KEY FACTS



You can’t “see” a concussion on a scan.



Healing takes time: it’s not instant.



Every concussion is unique.



Communication supports safer recovery.



Healthy Students. Bright Futures.

Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
Health Services Department



When in doubt, get checked out.

Early recognition protects health, learning, and long-term brain wellness.

SOURCES AND RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP

CDC Concussion Guideline
www.cdc.gov/traumatic-brain-injury

Alaska Youth Brain Injury Program
www.alaska.gov/dph/braininjury

Concussion Awareness Training Tool (CATT Online)
www.cattonline.com

Brain Injury Association of America
www.biausa.org

This information is for general education and does not replace evaluation or recommendations from a licensed healthcare provider.