

## Concussion Management Tips

### Modify the child's play environment by:

- Making spaces smaller
- Putting away active toys



### Adult-supervised play with:

- Blocks, puzzles, colouring, reading
- Swimming, stroller rides, walking, sandbox

**! A second concussion while the brain is healing can be very dangerous! There is a risk of brain damage and in rare cases, death.**

### DO NOT allow child to:

- Play on riding toys, scooters or bicycles
- Participate in ball games
- Run, wrestle or climb
- Playground activities (e.g., slides, swings)
- Watch a lot of TV



## INJURY PREVENTION

- Infants and toddlers should **play where it is safe** and be **supervised** by a responsible adult
- **Never leave your child unattended on high surfaces** (e.g., changing table, countertop)
- Use an **approved infant/toddler car seat** that is appropriate for the age and size of the child
- Toddlers should **wear appropriate protective gear** during sports and recreational activities (e.g., a properly fitted helmet while riding a bicycle).
- Toddlers should only participate in **age-appropriate sport activities**
- Be **cautious in and around swimming areas.**
- **Make your home safe.**
  - *This includes:*
    - Keeping the floors free of clutter or anything that may cause the child to trip and fall
    - Blocking off stairways
    - Using safety products (e.g., safety gates, cabinet locks, window guards, wall anchors for furniture/TV).

For more information, please visit  
[www.canchild.ca](http://www.canchild.ca)



This project is funded by The Canadian Institutes of Health Research



# MILD TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY / CONCUSSION

## Infants & Toddlers



**A concussion is a brain injury  
and must be taken seriously!**

# Can an infant or toddler have a concussion?

**-YES!** A child of any age who has a direct or indirect hit, blow or force to the head or body could have a concussion. A concussion, also known as a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI), changes the way the brain works.

## Common Causes:



- Falls
- Motor vehicle crashes
- Bicycle crashes or other sports/activity injuries
- Struck by/against events (e.g., colliding with a moving or stationary object)
- Assault (including forceful shaking)

**! Falls around the home are the leading cause of head injury for infant and toddlers!**

## What to do if you suspect your child had a significant impact to the head:

1. Call your physician or go to the local Emergency Department immediately. *Even if you are not sure, take your child in to be safe!*
2. Remember to make a follow up appointment with your physician or brain injury specialist to have your child's symptoms monitored.
3. Ensure that your child plays quietly for at least the first 24 hours with **NO** highly active play (e.g., NO running, fast action, rough play, running or jarring motions)

## Symptoms in Infants & Toddlers

*Symptoms may be more difficult to recognize in infants and toddlers because they communicate differently than older children!*

- Headache or persistent rubbing of the head
- Nausea and vomiting
- Unsteady walking, loss of balance or poor coordination
- Loss of ability to carry out newly learned skills (e.g., toilet training, speech)
- Lack of interest in favourite toys
- Cranky, irritable or difficult to console
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping patterns
- Tiring easily or listlessness
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Visual problems

**! One of the most obvious symptoms of concussion in infants & toddlers is loss of balance, especially if there is also nausea or vomiting.**

## RED FLAG SYMPTOMS

*If any of the following symptoms develop, go to the emergency department/seek further medical help immediately:*

- Large bumps, bruises or unexplained swelling on the head
- Increased drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- Headaches worsen or neck pain
- Persistent vomiting
- Blood or fluid in the ear
- Pupils are unequal in size
- Seizures

## Recovery & Management

### Immediately:

- ⇒ Watch your infant/toddler more closely 24—48 hours after the injury because serious symptoms can develop!
- ⇒ Do not send your child to childcare for at least 48 hours and, if possible, a full week.

**! Extra supervision of your child after MTBI/concussion is extremely important!**

### During Recovery:

- ⇒ When returning to childcare, inform your provider about the injury, symptoms and the need for close supervision.
- ⇒ Modify the child's activities and play environment (see *Concussion Management Tips* on reverse for specific suggestions)
- ⇒ Quiet environments and activities are recommended for the first week; longer if your child is not back to his/her self.
- ⇒ Your child should not return to overly active or rough play until your doctor or brain injury clinician establishes that it is safe.



### Long Term:

- ⇒ Watch your infant/toddler closely for several weeks throughout their recovery for symptoms and to prevent further injury as they return to rough play.
- ⇒ If your child still has behavioural or personality changes one month after the injury, further assessment by a brain injury clinician may be required