

Signs and Symptoms of Concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI)

The signs and symptoms of a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI) can be subtle. Symptoms of an MTBI may not appear until days or weeks following the injury or may even be missed as people may look fine even though they may act or feel differently. The following are some common signs and symptoms of an MTBI:

- Headaches or neck pain that do not go away;
- Difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions;
- Slowness in thinking, speaking, acting, or reading;
- Getting lost or easily confused;
- Feeling tired all of the time, having no energy or motivation;
- Mood changes (feeling sad or angry for no reason);
- Changes in sleep patterns (sleeping a lot more or having a hard time sleeping);
- Light-headedness, dizziness, or loss of balance;
- Urge to vomit (nausea);
- Increased sensitivity to lights, sounds, or distractions;
- Blurred vision or eyes that tire easily;
- Loss of sense of smell or taste; and
- Ringing in the ears.¹

Children with a brain injury can have the same symptoms as adults, but it is often harder for them to let others know how they feel. Call your child's doctor if they have had a blow to the head and you notice any of these symptoms:

- Tiredness or listlessness;
- Irritability or crankiness (will not stop crying or cannot be consoled);
- Changes in eating (will not eat or nurse);
- Changes in sleep patterns;
- Changes in the way the child plays;
- Changes in performance at school;
- Lack of interest in favorite toys or activities;
- Loss of new skills, such as toilet training;
- Loss of balance or unsteady walking; or
- Vomiting.¹

If you think you or someone you know has an MTBI, contact your health care provider. Your health care provider can refer you to a neurologist, neuropsychologist, neurosurgeon, or other concussion specialist. Getting help soon after the injury by trained specialists may speed recovery.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Facts about concussion and brain injury, 1999.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/Signs_and_Symptoms.htm. Retrieved November 2007