

Let's Talk About...

Brain injury: Keeping your child safe after a head injury

It's important to keep your child safe after a brain injury. This helps your child recover while preventing another injury as the brain heals. Because it takes weeks or months for the brain to heal, a second head injury can be more serious and also delay healing. Multiple brain injuries, or concussions, can cause life-long thinking and memory problems.

Why is my child at increased risk for harm after brain injury?

- Your child's brain is more sensitive to injury now, so even a small hit to their head can be harmful.
- Your child may be more impulsive (not thinking before they act) and may get into dangerous situations more easily.
- Your child's balance and coordination may have been affected by the brain injury.
- Your child feels better and does not realize their brain is still healing.

Why does my child need more supervision now?

You will need to supervise your child closely while their brain heals.

- Your child may need help making safe decisions.
- Your child may need help to relearn or practice good social skills.
- Your child may forget about activities they shouldn't do while healing.
- Your child may not be able to handle peer pressure.

How can I protect my child and help prevent further injuries?

- Don't let your child participate in impact sports or high-speed activities until their healthcare provider says it's okay.
- Establish clear rules.
- Help your child avoid dangerous situations by driving them to school and keeping guns, knives, or unsafe tools out of their reach.
- Use positive reminders such as, "Please walk" instead of "Don't run."
- Praise and point out good behavior.
- Have a buddy system to help your child get to school, walk between classes, and support them when needed.
- In order to make good decisions, make sure your child rests at home and school so they are not tired or overwhelmed.



- Have your child play with friends at your home so you can closely watch them.
- Consider finding an aide to help your child at school.
- Make an emergency plan with your child for when they feel worried or unsafe.
- Don't allow your teen to drive until the doctor says it's okay.
- Always have your child sit in their car seat or booster seat or use a seatbelt.

How can I help my child make good choices?

- Role-play situations with your child so they can practice making good choices.
- Talk to your child's babysitters, daycare, teachers, and coaches about their brain injury and how to help your child be safe and succeed.
- Post signs around the house with reminders to turn off the stove, unplug the iron, or turn off the water.

- Teach your child's siblings and friends how to help your child.

Remember: The most important thing you can do for your child after a brain injury is keep them safe and protect their brain from more injury.

What are some activities my child can do while they heal?

- Read books
- Do schoolwork
- Do puzzles, Sudoku, or other brain teasers
- Walk or hike
- Do strength training, including squats, lunges, and sit-ups
- Do yoga
- Play golf
- Snowshoe
- Swim laps (no water play, jumping, or diving)
- Play card games
- Do memory games
- Plant a garden
- Learn a musical instrument

Notes

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