



Concussion Conversations

A conversation guide for talking to your teen about preventing concussions and other serious head injuries



Children are more seriously affected by concussions and brain injuries than adults. In particular, youth that are racial and ethnic minorities have higher rates of concussion than other groups. As a parent, you can't always prevent an injury from happening. But you can talk to your teen about concussions, what to do if they happen, and how to stay safe. Talking about head injuries can create a safe space for your teen to make good choices about their health for life.

- **Talk about head injuries before they happen.** Talk to your teen early and often about preventing head injuries and concussion signs and symptoms. Make sure it's comfortable and safe for them to tell you about any head hits, and that you want them to share. Praise them when they do.
- **Use safe play strategies.** Create fun ways for them to play safely and tell them how unsafe actions can put them and others at risk for injury. Teach them safe play rules and why a head injury is serious.
- **Check in often.** If your teen had a recent hit to the head and is not feeling or acting well, use simple words and phrases to ask how they feel. If there is any chance they might have a concussion, stop play and contact a healthcare provider right away.
- **Be a role model for safe behavior.** Make sure your teen knows that you always take concussion safety seriously for everyone. Youth who see their parents wear helmets when bike riding and buckling-up when riding in or driving a car are more likely to do that too.

Sometimes, young people might have trouble understanding why concussion safety is important. They sometimes think they're superheroes — that they can't get hurt and nothing bad could ever happen to them. Talk to them about concussion safety, what can happen if they hurt their head, and the importance of telling you about symptoms. Explain why it's important to get help in ways that are important to them, like being able to return to play sooner.

By taking the right steps to care for their health today, you can help them reach their full potential for a brighter future.

