

## CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

This sheet has information to help protect your children or teens from concussion or other serious brain injury. Use this information at your children's or teens' rodeo, events and practices to learn how to spot a concussion and what to do if a concussion occurs.



HEADS UP  
CONCUSSION

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.



### HOW CAN I SPOT A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION?

Children and teens who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or simply say they just “don’t feel right” after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body—may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

#### SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS, DIRECTORS OR JUDGES

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Forgets their turn, is confused about the rodeo or is unsure of an event, time, or score.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (**even briefly**).
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.
- Can’t recall events prior to or after a hit or fall.

#### SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY CHILDREN AND TEENS

- Headache or “pressure” in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision.
- Bothered by light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.
- Just not “feeling right,” or “feeling down.”

## WHAT ARE SOME MORE SERIOUS DANGER SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR?

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1 or take your child or teen to the emergency department right away if, after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, he or she has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other.
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up.
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away.
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination.
- Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching).
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation.
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). **Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously.**

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD OR TEEN HAS A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION?

As a parent, if you think your child or teen may have a concussion, you should:

1. Remove your child or teen from the rodeo.
2. Keep your child or teen out of their events the day of the injury. Your child or teen should be seen by a health care provider and only return to competition with permission from a health care provider who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.
3. Ask your evaluating health care provider for written release instructions for your child or teen return to rodeo competition.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a health care provider should assess a child or teen for a possible concussion. Concussion signs and symptoms often show up soon after the injury. But you may not know how serious the concussion is at first, and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days.

The brain needs time to heal after a concussion. A child's or teen's return to rodeo practice and competition should be a gradual process that is carefully managed and monitored by a health care provider.

## HOW CAN I HELP KEEP MY CHILDREN OR TEENS SAFE?

Rodeo is a great way for children and teens to stay healthy and can help them do well in school. To help lower your children's or teens' chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, you should:

- Help create a culture of safety for the team.
  - » Teach ways to lower the chances of getting a concussion.
  - » Talk with your children or teens about concussions and ask if they have concerns about reporting a concussion. Talk with them about their concerns; emphasize the importance of reporting concussions and taking time to recover from one.
  - » Ensure that they follow the CHSRA/NHSRA rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
  - » Tell your children or teens that you expect them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- When appropriate for their events, teach your children or teens that wearing a helmet can lower the chances of the most serious types of brain or head injury. However, there is no "concussion-proof" helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for children and teens to avoid hits to the head.



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Content Source: CDC's HEADS UP campaign. Customizable HEADS UP fact sheets were made possible through a grant to the CDC Foundation from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).