PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

A Fact Sheet for PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut

What is Brain Injury?

Brain injury is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that disrupts brain function. Not all blows and jolts to the head result in brain injury. Brain injury includes the term **concussion** which has gained increasing attention in the past several years. Brain injury also includes injuries to the brain caused by loss of oxygen to the brain (through near drowning), infections (such as meningitis or encephalitis), brain tumors, stroke, and toxic exposures.

Did You Know?

Brain injury is the leading cause of injury and death in young people in Connecticut. The Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut is committed to the prevention of brain injury through raising awareness about brain injury and its prevention, particularly in our youth.

How Does Brain Injury Affect You?

Brain injury can cause a wide range of functional short or long-term changes affecting thinking, sensations, language, or emotions.

* Motor issues (how we move)
* Cognition & Thinking (memory & reasoning)
* Sensation (touch, taste, & smell)
* Language (communication, understanding)
* Emotions & Behavior (depression, anxiety, impulsivity, agitation)

Brain Injury Alliance CONNECTICUT

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Connecticut's partner in brain injury prevention & recovery for more than 30 years.

How Can I Keep My Child Safe?

To help lower your child's chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, you should encourage a culture of safety in your family.

Buckle Up: Wearing a seat belt increases your risk of surviving a crash by 75%. Buckling up in the backseat is just as important, as unbelted passengers continue to move at the speed of the vehicle they are riding in until they hit something. Also, the safest place for children up to the age of 13 is the backseat—the force of the passenger side airbag deploying can cause injury or death in children. In addition, half of fatal crashes involve front impact, making the back seat the safest.

Safety in the Car: Drivers looking out the windshield can ***miss seeing up to 50%*** of what's around them when talking on any kind of a cell phone, including hands free. Be a role model for your child by not driving distracted, and talk to them about what they should do if they are driving with someone who is distracted.

Safe Cycling: Always wear a helmet, and encourage each family member to wear a helmet—regardless of their age. In Connecticut, anyone 15 years of age or younger must wear a bike helmet but remember that the risk of brain injury does not reduce on your 16th birthday.

Walk This Way: A pedestrian is killed every minute and injured every 7 minutes in traffic crashes. Discourage distracted walking, always cross at corners, stop on the curb and look both ways, and **make eye contact with the driver** (never assume they see you).

Don't Play Games with Concussions: Kids who continue to play after experiencing a concussion, or return to play before their brain is fully healed, have a greater chance of getting another concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs while the brain is still healing can be serious or even fatal. Sports are an important way to stay healthy, and recognize the importance of teamwork and collaboration. Learning how to identify, treat and manage concussions can keep your teen safe.

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To learn more,
go to www.biact.org/protectyourbrain