

For Immediate Release

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Safe Kids PA Shares Concussion Awareness Tips

Mechanicsburg, Pa. – March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. According to the CDC, about 7 out of 10 emergency department visits for sports and recreation-related Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs) and concussions are among children ages 17 and under. TBIs and concussions also occur in children during everyday activities within their homes, motor vehicles, and on a playground. A concussion feels different to each person, you might notice concussion symptoms right away, but sometimes it takes hours or days until you notice that something isn't right. It is vital to ask a child how they feel and what symptoms they are experiencing.

Safe Kids Pennsylvania wants to ensure a safe sporting season for children who participate in all physical sports and activities. For this age group of children 17 and under, Heads Up data from 2023 showcases that boys have about twice the rate of emergency department visits for [sports or recreation-related TBIs and concussions](#) than girls. However, girls have a higher chance of experiencing sports-related concussions than boys in sports that use the same rules, including soccer and basketball.

In recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month, Safe Kids PA offers these tips from [Safe Kids Worldwide](#), [Heads Up Foundation of the CDC](#), and [Healthy Children from the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) to ensure safe sportsmanship, playtime, home, and motor vehicle injury prevention for children.

- **Home Safety**
 - Use approved safety gates at the tops and bottoms of stairs and attach them to the wall, if possible. Remember to read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels to make sure you have the right gate for your needs. Not all gates are safe for use at the top of stairs.
 - Never leave a child out of reach on high surfaces including couches and kitchen counters to prevent falls. Keep one hand on a child when changing their diaper or pullup on a changing table.
 - Screens are meant to keep bugs out, not children in. Properly install window guards to prevent unintentional window falls. For windows above the first floor, include an emergency release device in case of fire.
- **Playground Safety**
 - Actively supervise children on playgrounds and teach children that pushing, shoving or crowding while on the playground can be dangerous.
 - Take children in your care to playgrounds with shock-absorbing surfaces such as rubber, synthetic turf, sand, pea gravel, wood chips or mulch. If a child falls, the landing will be more cushioned than on asphalt, concrete, grass or dirt.
 - Make sure there are guardrails to help prevent falls and look out for things in the play area that can trip your child, like tree stumps or rocks.

- **Physical Activity and Sports Safety**
 - Assure any child in your care wears an [age-appropriate helmet](#) and equipment for the appropriate activity or sport they are participating in.
 - Teach child athletes proper techniques and ways to avoid hits to the head and limit the amount of contact in sports practices.
 - Ensure child athletes avoid unsafe actions such as striking another athlete in the head, making illegal contacts or checking, tackling, or colliding with an unprotected opponent, and/or trying to injure or put another athlete at risk for injury.
- **Motor vehicle safety**
 - Ensure any child in your care is always properly buckled up in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt — [whichever is appropriate for their age and size](#).
 - Avoid reusing a car seat that shows signs of damage, has been recalled or is expired, has been involved in a crash, or lacks essential information such as an expiration date, model number, or instructions.
 - If your child is learning to drive, stress the importance of driver safety by talking with them about [the eight "danger zones"](#): Driver inexperience, Driving with teen or young adult passengers, Nighttime driving, Not using seat belts, Distracted driving, Drowsy driving, Reckless driving, Impaired driving.

Additionally, Safe Kids PA suggests that caregivers, coaches, and trainers stay informed about the safety regulations regarding headgear and the preventative measures to take for childhood head injuries.

If your child or a child in your care is experiencing concussion symptoms after a head injury, seek medical attention immediately. To learn more about concussion awareness visit the CDC's, [Heads Up](#) website.

More information on concussion awareness in adolescents is available at www.pasafekids.org or by calling (717) 766-1616.

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Safe Kids Pennsylvania (SKPA) is part of Safe Kids Worldwide's global network dedicated to keeping kids safe from preventable childhood injury, which is the number one cause of death among children ages 1 to 19. These injuries range from accidental falls, to poisonings, car crashes, drownings, and many more unintentional injuries. SKPA promotes and supports childhood injury prevention activities through education, collaboration, and advocacy throughout Pennsylvania.

Safe Kids Pennsylvania is one of many statewide coalitions under Safe Kids Worldwide and is led by the American Trauma Society, PA Division. For more information on Safe Kids PA, visit our official SKPA [website](#) and social media platforms; [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).