



NEWS RELEASE

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Provincial Health Services Authority
BC Children's Hospital
Trauma Services BC

Get a head start on preventing concussions: Safe Kids Week 2018

Vancouver – Every year more than 5,000 children in BC between the ages of 0 – 14 years are diagnosed with a concussion. From baseball games, to school sports days and neighbourhood play dates, concussions can happen wherever kids are active and exploring.

[Safe Kids Week](#), an annual public awareness campaign organized by Parachute Canada to reduce preventable injuries in children, is taking place across Canada June 4 to 10, 2018.

This year's focus is on awareness of concussion at home, at play, and on the road.

“Children are naturally active and curious and their developing brains are more vulnerable to injury than adult brains,” said [Dr. Ash Singhal](#), pediatric neurosurgeon and medical director of the Trauma Program at BC Children's Hospital. “If a child does injure their head, it is crucial for parents and caregivers to recognize the signs and symptoms of concussion – things like headaches, nausea, dizziness and confusion – and to take steps to quickly get medical care when it is needed.”

A concussion is a brain injury that results from a significant impact to the head or body that can cause the brain to move inside the skull. The impact of these hits cause the brain to suddenly shift or shake inside the skull, damaging nerve fibers.

“Each child's recovery from a concussion is unique and parents and guardians are always central to the recovery process,” said Dr. Shelina Babul, an associate director and sports injury specialist with the BC Injury Research & Prevention Unit (BCIRPU) at BC Children's. “It is their role to act as an advocate for their child with medical professionals, teachers and coaches to support a gradual return to the activities their child loves and help their child enjoy the best-possible recovery.”

More information on how to recognize, diagnose and manage a concussion, and practical tips for supporting a child's recovery are available through the [Concussion Awareness Training Tool](#). Developed by Dr. Babul and the BCIRPU, this website features education modules and resources for parents, players, coaches, teachers, health professionals and more.

Common causes of concussions and head injuries in BC children

- From 2014 to 2016, 3,300 BC children were hospitalized due to injuries. Approximately 600 of those had sustained concussions or severe head injuries.
- **At home:** The majority of diagnosed concussions among children in BC between the ages of 1 - 4 years were due to falls at home.
- **At play:** Approximately one quarter of children hospitalized with concussions/head injuries from sports such as cycling, skiing/snowboarding, skateboarding or ATV riding were not wearing a helmet at the time of injury.
- **On the road:** The most frequent cause of concussions among children in BC was related to road use – most often involving cycling and pedestrian-related accidents.

For more tips to keep kids safe on their travels, see Parachute Canada – a national charitable organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives: www.parachutecanada.org.

The BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit (BCIRPU) is a core research program within the Evidence to Innovation theme at BC Children's Hospital Research Institute. The unit's role is to serve as a provincial "hub" to provide research-based leadership and coordination to stakeholders in order to reduce the societal and economic burden of injury among all age groups in British Columbia. BCIRPU is a strategic leader in effective prevention strategies to help keep people out of hospital, reduce crisis care intervention, and to create a healthier, more active, and productive population. For more information, visit www.injuryresearch.bc.ca or follow us on Twitter at [@BCIRPU](https://twitter.com/BCIRPU).

BC Children's Hospital Research Institute conducts discovery, translational and clinical research to benefit the health of children and their families. We are supported by BC Children's Hospital Foundation; are part of BC Children's Hospital and the Provincial Health Services Authority; and work in close partnership with the University of British Columbia. For more information, visit www.bcchr.ca or follow us on Twitter [@BCCHRResearch](https://twitter.com/BCCHRResearch).

BC Children's Hospital, a part of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides expert care for the province's most seriously ill or injured children, youth and young adults, including newborns. Child and Youth Mental Health provides a diverse range of specialized and one-of-a-kind tertiary mental health and concurrent disorders services for children, adolescents and young adults across the province. For more information, visit www.bcchildrens.ca or follow us on Twitter [@BCChildrensHosp](https://twitter.com/BCChildrensHosp).

The Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) plans, manages and evaluates selected specialty and province-wide health care services across BC, working with the five geographic health authorities to deliver province-wide solutions that improve the health of British Columbians. For more information, visit www.phsa.ca or follow us on Twitter [@PHSAofBC](https://twitter.com/PHSAofBC).

The BC Trauma Registry collects data on patients who require complex trauma care. The registry is a part of Trauma Services BC, a PHSA program that works to ensure all British Columbians have access to a high-performing, integrated and inclusive provincial system.



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