



Truckin' kid on board

Truck docs like me get plenty of questions about every facet of health and wellness on the road. This includes questions on that baby on the way and illness or injuries that occur when you are truckin' with your child.

I am an employed OTR driver, and I just found out I'm three months pregnant. I haven't told my company. Will the constant vibration of the truck hurt my baby? How long do you think I can drive – given that I have a healthy pregnancy?

There is no solid data on an over-the-road trucker who is pregnant. In many jobs women work up until their eighth month of pregnancy. As a trucker, you are much different, since there are factors that may affect the baby that most doctors are not familiar with.

The baby is protected from most vibration by amniotic fluid so I don't think this would be an issue. You must, however, obtain good prenatal care.

Truck driving is classified by the Department of Labor as heavy duty so your doctor needs to know this. I would let your company know ASAP and talk to your obstetrician/gynecologist. Many a baby has been born in a truck, but don't take any chances. It is important to plan to be home and to have an established relationship with your doctor.

What should you do if you hit your head and think you may have a concussion? My young son was with me in the truck and suffered a head injury when he fell out of the truck. How can you tell? How do you treat a concussion? I've always heard you shouldn't go to sleep. Is that true?

Concussions are when the head is struck by a direct blow or a violent motion, causing the brain to get bounced back and forth. When this happens, the brain can swell. Sometimes the symptoms are slight (dazed), and at the other extreme there will be a loss of consciousness (knocked out). Symptoms of concussions can include:

- Headache or pressure
- Confusion, delayed verbal response



- Dizziness
- Ringing in the ears
- Vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech; and/or
- Fatigue

Other symptoms can occur immediately or be delayed for some time after the injury. These can include trouble concentrating, sleep problems, sensitivity to light and noise, and personality changes to name a few.

If there is no loss of consciousness and the person remains alert, can communicate and can move around normally, it's likely not a concussion that needs anything beyond a close eye. If the person loses consciousness for more than 30 seconds, has repeated vomiting, becomes confused or disoriented, loses motor function or has slurred speech, you should seek immediate medical attention.

In mild cases, you can treat the injured part of the head with ice to ease the pain. If the person has a mild headache, it is OK to give them some acetaminophen, commonly known as Tylenol. But do not give them aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen or other NSAIDs, which can increase the chance for bleeding.

Even mild symptoms that persist for more than one or two days should be checked out by a physician. **LL**

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