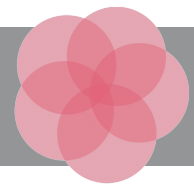


Concussion Information Sheet



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how the brain works. It can happen after a blow to the head, face, neck, or body. A person does not have to lose consciousness to have a concussion. Symptoms often appear immediately but may also start 1-2 days after the injury. A concussion can't be seen on x-rays or brain scans.

Common symptoms of a concussion are:

Physical:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Balance problems
- Reduced exercise tolerance

Cognitive/Mental:

- Feeling slow or tired
- Low energy
- Not thinking clearly
- Difficulty with computer work
- Difficulty reading
- Difficulty remembering

Emotional:

- Easily upset
- Easily angered
- Feeling sad
- Nervous/anxious
- Feeling more emotional

Sleep and fatigue:

- Sleeping more
- Sleeping less
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty staying asleep

What should a person do if they think they or another person may have a concussion?

If a concussion is suspected, stop the activity right away and see a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. Adults and children with a concussion should get guidance from a doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to full contact sport or high-risk activities for another concussion. *"If in doubt, sit them out."*

Red flag symptoms

Symptoms of a more severe injury may appear right away or up to a couple of days after the injury. If any of following symptoms are observed, call an ambulance or bring the person to a doctor for immediate medical care:

- Increased confusion
- Worsening severe headache
- Vomiting repeatedly
- Seizures
- Not waking up
- Trouble walking
- Difficulty talking
- Strange behaviour

How long does it take to recover from a concussion?

- Concussion recovery is different for each person.
- Typically, children and adults recover within 2-4 weeks; adolescents may take longer to become symptom-free.
- Up to 30% of people may have a slower recovery; doctors can screen for risk factors of a prolonged recovery.
- For those at risk for a slower recovery, very early care from an interdisciplinary concussion team is recommended. Interdisciplinary teams should include doctors and clinicians across different disciplines who work together to assess, diagnose, and create a treatment plan.

Recovery tips:

- Complete rest for more than 2 days after a concussion may slow recovery and is no longer recommended. Use the suggested return to activity and school/work protocols on page 2.
- Avoid any activity that has a risk of body contact, falling, or hitting one's head until medically cleared by a doctor.
- Early care (as early as 1-2 days after the injury) by an interdisciplinary concussion team may help people get back to activities faster and safer.
- Supervised aerobic exercise (walking, stationary bike) as early as 1-2 days after the injury may improve recovery.
- School with accommodations should begin after 1-2 days. Missing more than one week of school may be harmful. Medical clearance is not required to return to school.
- Ensure good quality sleep, drink water, and eat balanced meals. Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Emotional changes are common with concussion; mindfulness, exercise, and speaking with people you trust can help.
- Computer screens, smartphones and video games may bring on symptoms; avoid these in the initial days if they make symptoms worse.