

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI). It is caused by acceleration or deceleration of the brain within the skull following an impact to the head, face, neck, or body that disrupts normal brain functioning.

Concussion Signs & Symptoms



CONCUSSION SIGNS & SYMPTOMS ARE THE BRAIN'S WAY OF SHOWING IT IS INJURED AND NOT FUNCTIONING NORMALLY.



Physical

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Sick to the stomach
- Pressure in the head
- Balance problems
- Sensitive to light or noise
- Blurred vision
- Nausea or vomiting
- Ringing in the ears
- Drowsiness



Emotional

- Irritable or angry
- Nervous or anxious
- Sadness
- More emotional

Sleep Related

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

Cognitive

- Confused
- Not thinking clearly
- Feeling slowed down
- Memory problems
- Problems concentrating
- Feeling like "in a fog"



Red Flag Symptoms



If a person shows any Red Flag Symptoms, **Call 911** and get immediate medical help.

- Neck pain or Tenderness
- Loss of Vision or Double Vision
- Weakness, Tingling or Burning in Arms/Leg
- Severe or Increasing Headache
- Seizure or Convulsion
- Loss of Consciousness
- Deteriorating Conscious State
- Increasingly Restless, Agitated or Combative
- Visible Deformity of the Skull

If the person is unconscious, DO NOT:

- Move the person
- Remove any equipment, like a helmet or padding, in case of an injury to the spine



RED FLAG SYMPTOMS MAY BE A SIGN OF A MORE SERIOUS INJURY.



Concussion Recognition & Diagnosis



A concussion cannot be seen on routine medical imaging, such as an X-ray, CT scan or MRI. Recognition relies on identifying changes in how a person thinks, feels and functions following a suspected injury.

Everyone can play a role in recognizing a suspected concussion. Knowing the signs and symptoms and reporting concerns can help ensure the person receives appropriate medical assessment and care.

A formal concussion diagnosis is made following a comprehensive medical assessment. In Canada, medical doctors and nurse practitioners have the appropriate scope of practice to conduct this assessment and provide a concussion diagnosis.

Concussion Treatment & Recovery



General recommendations for concussion recovery include a short period of relative rest (24 to 48 hours), followed by a gradual return to activity.

Recovery can involve a team approach. Physiotherapists, athletic therapists and other qualified healthcare professionals can play important roles in symptom management, rehabilitation and supporting recovery, within their respective scopes of practice.

Concussion symptoms usually resolve within **one to four weeks**. However, approximately **15 to 30%** of people experience symptoms that persist beyond four weeks. Those with persisting symptoms may benefit from specialized interdisciplinary concussion care tailored to their individual symptoms and needs.