

HEALING FROM YOUR CONCUSSION

Post-concussion information sheet



Parachute
Concussion Series

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works. A concussion can't be seen on X-rays or scans.

What causes a concussion?

Any blow or hit to your head, face or neck, or body that causes sudden shaking of the head can cause a concussion. Concussions can happen during sports like hockey, soccer or volleyball, or during motor vehicle collisions or falls.

When should a concussion be suspected?

Concussion should be suspected in anyone who takes a blow to the head, face, neck or body and shows **any** of the signs or symptoms of a concussion. Just one sign or symptom is enough to get checked out.

What could it feel like if I have a concussion?

Symptoms are warnings that something may be wrong. You don't need to be knocked out (black out) to have a concussion, and you may not even notice symptoms until the next day. Common symptoms are:

PHYSICAL



- Headaches or head pressure
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Blurred or fuzzy vision
- Balance problems

MENTAL



- Difficulty remembering
- Difficulty reading
- Difficulty working on a computer
- Feeling slowed down
- Not thinking clearly
- Feeling tired or having no energy

EMOTIONAL



- Easily upset or angered
- Sadness
- Nervous or anxious
- Feeling more emotional

SLEEP



- Sleeping more than usual
- Sleeping less or having a hard time falling asleep



What are the visible signs of a concussion?

Signs of concussion describe how a person looks or acts when they are injured. Common signs of a concussion are:

- Lying still on the ground or ice
- Slow to get up
- Confusion or can't answer questions
- Blank stare
- Difficulty standing or walking
- Injury to the face or holding their head

What should a child do if they think they or a friend has a concussion?

All children who may have a concussion should immediately stop the activity they are doing and see a medical doctor or nurse practitioner. All children with a concussion should also get a note from a doctor or nurse practitioner before returning to sports.

When should a child with a concussion go back to see a doctor or nurse?

Children with a concussion should return to see the doctor or nurse if they have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Feeling more confused
- Headache keeps getting worse
- Vomiting more than once
- Seizures
- Not waking up
- Trouble walking
- Difficulty talking
- Strange behaviour



What can a child do to help recover from a concussion?

It is important that all children with a concussion take time to recover completely. Here are some tips:

- Avoid physical and mental activities that make symptoms worse
- Take a break if symptoms get worse
- Avoid activities that can be stressful
- Drink regular amounts of water and eat regular and balanced meals
- Get regular amounts of sleep
- Spend time with friends and family
- If school is more difficult, or they feel more sad or nervous than normal, they should tell a trusted friend, family member, teacher, guidance counsellor, doctor, nurse or Elder
- Avoid drugs, alcohol, and activities where they can hit their head
- Go to all medical appointments

When can a child go back to school, sports, and outdoor activities?

It is important that all children make a gradual (step-by-step) return to school and sports. Each step should take at least one day. If symptoms return, go back to the last step and try it again until you can do it without feeling worse. Always get a doctor's note before returning to full-contact practice and games.

Return to School Steps

Stage	Activity	Example
1	Activities at home that do not make you feel worse	Activities that do not make symptoms worse (e.g. reading, texting, screen time). Start at 5-15 minutes at a time.
2	School activities	Homework, reading or other activities outside of the classroom.
3	Return to school part-time	Getting back to school for a few hours or half days.
4	Return to school full-time	Slow return to full days at school.

Return to Sport/Play Steps

Stage	Activity	Example
1	Physical activities that do not make you feel worse	Walking at home or in school.
2	Light physical activity	Jogging or stationary cycling at slow to medium speed. No weight training.
3	Sport-specific exercise	Running or skating drills. No drills with risk of head injury.
4	Non-contact practice	Practice without body contact. Gym class activities without risk of head injury.
5	Full contact practice	Full practices after doing full time school and getting a doctor's note.
6	Return to sport	Normal game play.

How long does it take a child to recover after a concussion?

Most children with a concussion will recover in four weeks but some (about 1 in 4 people) can take longer.

What can happen if a child goes back to sports too early after a concussion?

If children with a concussion go back to sports too early after a concussion, they can have another injury that can lead to worse or longer symptoms or a more severe or fatal brain injury.

How can children help prevent concussions and their consequences?

To prevent concussions, children should follow the rules of their sport, respect their opponents, avoid head contact, and tell parents, teachers or coaches if they think they or a teammate may have a concussion. Children should always wear helmets during outdoor activities such as skiing, skating or riding bikes.

How can I learn more about concussions?

To learn more about concussions please visit: parachute.ca/concussion