

Concussion



Head knocks, also known as concussion or mild traumatic brain injury, harm our brain.



Connectivity
Traumatic Brain Injury Australia

Your brain is the most important thing you own. It makes you who you are.

Head knocks, also known as concussion or mild traumatic brain injury, harm our brain.

Look after your brain by seeking help if you or someone you know has had a head knock.

What is a concussion?

Concussion is a type of brain injury. Concussion often occurs when a person gets a direct hit to the head or face.

Concussion can also happen when a person gets hit in the neck or upper body which causes the head to move rapidly, and your brain shakes within your skull.

This is called a concussion and it can affect how your brain works.

Concussion won't show up on X-ray or other brain scans, but it can make you feel not right, and it can affect how you think, feel and even sleep.

Concussion is an invisible injury and it's important to take all concussions seriously.

What causes a concussion?

- Falls
- Sports
- Car crashes
- Accidents at school or work
- Assault (including family and domestic violence)



How can I help prevent concussions?

- Fastening your seat belt when travelling in a car.
- Making sure children are secured in child safety seats. Children under 7 years are generally not allowed to sit in the front seat.
- Taking action to prevent falls - don't stand on unstable surfaces that you could fall from, and move or tape down small rugs so you don't trip over.
- Make sure sporting teams that you might play for follow rules about head knocks and concussion. Take time to recover from injuries.

How would I know if any of my mob might have a concussion?

It can be hard to spot a concussion. This is because concussion can look different from person to person.

There are many **signs** and **symptoms** to look for.

Signs are things that you can see.

Symptoms are things that people say or tell you that they are feeling.

The signs and symptoms of a concussion do not always show up straight away.

No two concussions are the same.

The signs and symptoms of concussion can vary from person to person, even if they have had a concussion before.



What could a concussion look like?

Immediate signs of concussion include:

- No protection when falling (e.g. hands out to stop fall)
- Lying still and not moving
- Slow to get up
- Stumbling
- Balance problems or poor coordination

A person might:

- Grab or hold their head
- Have an injury to their face, head or neck
- Look dazed or vacant (blank stare)
- Be confused or drowsy or can't answer questions
- Have trouble speaking normally
- Repeat questions



A person does not have to be knocked out or lose consciousness to have a concussion.

What could a concussion feel like?

A concussion can make a person feel different - you may have physical, mental, emotional and sleep related symptoms.

A person can experience concussion symptoms straight after the injury has happened, but this is not always the case.

For some people, concussion symptoms don't show up until hours and/or days later.

Common concussion symptoms are:

Physical

- Headaches or head pressure
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise



Emotional

- Easily upset or angered
- Sad
- Nervous or anxious "on edge"
- Feeling more emotional than usual



Mental (Understanding)

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



Sleep

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



What should I do if any of my mob get a concussion?



If someone has a concussion, or you think they might have one, they should stop the activity they are doing right away and see a doctor or go to the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS). Having just one sign or symptom is enough to get checked out.

You also need to think about:

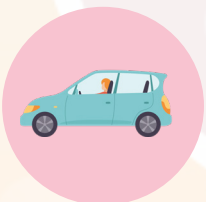
Danger Signs

Have someone watch the person for the first 24 - 48 hours to make sure they don't show or feel any of the danger signs.



Driving

Do not drive or operate heavy machinery until the doctor says it's ok.



Sleeping

Let the person sleep if they want to, but have someone check in on them.



Mental Activity

Light activity is OK, but try not to have too much screen time such as using your phone or watching TV for the first 48 hours.



Grog/yarndi/drugs

Do not drink grog, smoke yarndi, take sleeping pills or recreational drugs for the first 48 hours. These can make your symptoms worse. They can also make it difficult for other people to tell whether your injury is affecting you or not.



Pain Relief

Use Panadol or Paracetamol/Codeine for headaches. Do not use Aspirin or other anti-inflammatory pain medications such as Ibuprofen or Naproxen (NSAIDs), which may increase the risk of further problems. Check with your doctor about prescription medications.



Sports and physical activity

Light walking in the first 48 hours after a concussion is OK, as long as it doesn't make symptoms feel worse.



Danger signs

Danger signs are signs and symptoms that may mean it's a more severe brain injury. Go to your doctor, local AMS, nearest hospital or call an ambulance if someone shows any of the following signs or symptoms.

- Severe or increasing headache
- Loss of consciousness or deteriorating conscious state
- Seizures or convulsion
- Repeated vomiting
- Blurred, double or changes in vision
- Neck pain or tenderness
- Weakness or inability to move the body as usual
- Feelings of numbness, tingling, or burning in arms or legs
- Increased confusion, agitation, or restlessness
- Continual bleeding or clear fluid from the ear or nose



How long will it take to heal?

Most people fully recover from concussion in four weeks, but some can take longer to heal.

This is called Persisting Post-Concussion Symptoms (PPCS). After four weeks, if you do not feel like you are getting better, it's a good idea to speak to a doctor.

To learn more about ongoing symptoms, look at our PPCS Fact Sheet.

What can happen if I go back to activities too early after a concussion?

If you go back to activities too early after a concussion, you could have another injury. This could make your symptoms worse or could cause a more serious brain injury.

Make sure to take the time you need to heal. You may need to return to activities slowly and not all at once. Remember, each person's recovery time is different.



Connectivity
Traumatic Brain Injury Australia

DISCLAIMER

This flyer and the Connectivity website does not offer individual medical advice. If you have suffered a concussion seek medical advice.

www.connectivity.org.au

© Connectivity January 2025