

# Sport-Related Concussion

Concussion, also known as mild traumatic brain injury, is a type of head injury that can result from a forceful impact to the head, neck, or body, which causes the brain to move within the skull. Nerve cells and blood vessels in the brain may become damaged, causing changes to normal brain function. Concussion may result in changes or damage to the vision and balance systems. It may make a person feel physically unwell and/or experience changes in their thinking, mood, and sleeping patterns.

Contact and non-contact sports can both result in concussion.

**A person can experience a sport-related concussion during training or competition due to:**

- Collision with another athlete, such as a teammate or an opponent
- Contact with a piece of equipment
- Impact with the playing surface
- Falls or wipe-outs, particularly those occurring from a height or involving speed

**A person does not have to lose consciousness to have a concussion. In fact, more than 90% of concussions do not involve a loss of consciousness.**

## Recognising the Signs of Concussion

A concussion should be suspected for anyone who may have received a direct impact to the head or body. If this occurs the individual should be removed from activity, training or play immediately and assessed for symptoms of concussion.

Red flags are signs or symptoms that may indicate more severe injury to the brain. If someone who you suspect has had a concussion shows any red flags, seek immediate medical attention.

Signs are things that can be observed such as being slow to get up, lying motionless or having poor coordination

Symptoms are things that a person says they are feeling or experiencing  
The symptoms of concussion may appear at the time of injury, or they may develop and/or get worse in the hours or days that follow.

Symptoms - immediate	Delayed Symptoms - up to 72 hours post-injury	RED FLAGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache or pressure in the head</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Changes in vision</li><li>• Confusion</li><li>• Memory loss (amnesia)</li><li>• Increased irritability, frustration</li><li>• Feeling tired or drowsy</li><li>• Not feeling right</li><li>• Nausea and/or vomiting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persistent headaches</li><li>• Difficulties remembering or concentrating</li><li>• Sensitivity to light or noise</li><li>• Feelings of sadness</li><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Mood swings</li><li>• Changes in sleep patterns</li><li>• Fatigue or tiring easily</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Severe or increasing headache</li><li>• Loss of consciousness</li><li>• Seizure or convulsion</li><li>• Repeated vomiting</li><li>• Changes in vision</li><li>• Neck pain or tenderness</li><li>• Weakness or unable to move the body as usual</li><li>• Numbness, tingling, or burning in arms or legs</li><li>• Increased confusion, agitation, or restlessness</li><li>• Continual bleeding or clear liquid coming from ear or nose</li></ul>

## Concussion Management and Recovery

The first 24-48 hours following a concussion should be a period of relative, not strict rest. Following on from this time period your recovery may still take a number of weeks.

### General suggestions to help you get better include:

- You should be observed by a responsible adult for the first 24 - 48 hours. Seek immediate medical attention if you develop any red flags.
- As long as it does not make your symptoms more than mildly or briefly worse, you may return to light physical activity during this time (e.g. walking or stationary bike riding). You may partake in light cognitive activity, but limit screen time in the first 48 hours following your injury.
- Do not drive or operate heavy machinery for at least 24 hours. You should not drive until all your symptoms have resolved, or you have been cleared by a medical professional to return to driving and/or operating machinery.
- Use Paracetamol or Ibuprofen for pain and inflammation. Ice packs may be used on swollen or painful areas in the initial recovery period.
- Do not drink alcohol, 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.
- If possible, seek advice and avoid air travel during your recovery

A graded return to sport is recommended to help the recovery process. Check with your sporting club or national sporting code for their concussion guidelines or protocols. Speak to your doctor about getting a Return to Sport plan if required.

Most people will fully recover from concussion within 4 weeks. However, some people will experience concussion symptoms beyond this time. See your doctor for help if your symptoms do not improve, as they can refer you to one of a range of specialists.

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### More information

Connectivity Traumatic Brain Injury Australia is an Australia-wide not-for-profit organisation working to raise awareness of concussion and traumatic brain injury in the community. For more information on concussion, you can speak to your doctor, healthcare professional, or visit the Connectivity website at [www.connectivity.org.au](http://www.connectivity.org.au)



DISCLAIMER: This flyer and the Connectivity website does not offer medical advice for individuals. If you have suffered a concussion, please seek medical advice.