



Concussions

WHAT IS IT?

A rapid acceleration of the brain inside the skull. This causes multiple different signs and symptoms, including: physical, cognitive, emotional, and sleep-related issues.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

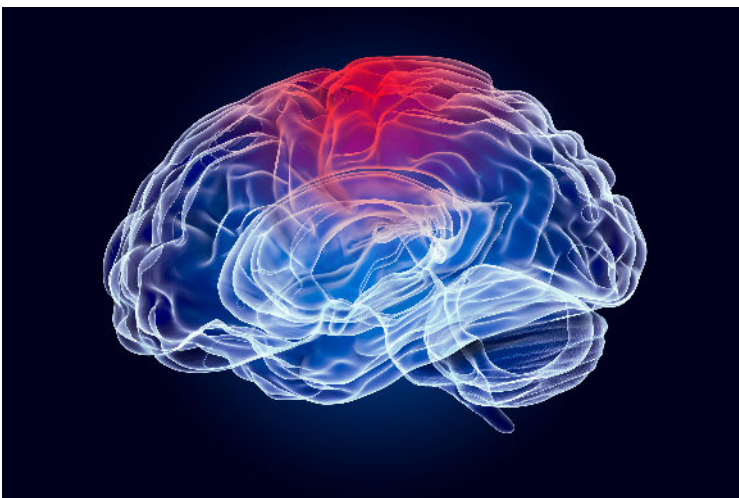
A hit to the head, face, neck, or elsewhere on the body with forces transmitted to the brain.

RISK FACTORS

A prior concussion makes you more at risk for another one.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- **PHYSICAL:** Headache, neck pain, sensitivity to light/noise, visual problems, dizziness, balance issues, nausea, vomiting
- **COGNITIVE:** Memory issues, difficulty concentrating, confusion, feeling slowed down, feeling “in a fog”, trouble thinking clearly
- **EMOTIONAL:** Anxiety, nervousness, depression, sadness, irritability, more emotional
- **SLEEP:** Fatigue, low energy, sleeping more or less, insomnia



HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

If you experience any one or more of the above signs or symptoms after an impact, then you should suspect a concussion and be assessed by a qualified health professional trained in concussion management.

Getting an MRI or scan done doesn't diagnose a concussion; rather, a multimodal assessment (including physical, visual, balance, and education-components) is indicated.

HOW CAN PHYSIO HELP?

A physiotherapist trained in concussion management works to figure out what types of activities or movements exacerbate symptoms. In the early stages, they do a multitude of assessments including:

- A physical assessment of the neck and cardiovascular system, to make sure that whiplash or increases in heart rate don't bring on symptoms;
- A visual and balance assessment, to rule out whether vision or inner ear issues aren't causing symptoms; and
- A discussion of sleep, diet, and anxiety; as stress and poor routines/habits can exacerbate symptoms.

Based on the results, they would then put together an individualized plan to help with the specific cause of your symptoms and provide education on symptom recovery, exacerbation of symptoms, and how best to return to school and/or play.



HELPFUL TIPS

- Take time away from environments that may worsen or bring on symptoms (e.g. school and sport)
- Do not stay in a dark room and rest for long periods of time. The current recommendation is symptom-limited activity within the first 24-48 hours. While you should be cautious, it's better for you to be somewhat active and do light exercise to ensure you don't exacerbate your symptoms.
- Do not be afraid of bringing on symptoms in a controlled manner. Your body adapts to the stress you put on it and this is how it grows and heals - especially in concussion rehab! As such, a trained concussion therapist can help you understand what you should feel, educate you on the appropriate steps, and make you feel confident in your recovery!



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