

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

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Concussions are mild traumatic brain injuries that can happen when your brain moves around quickly inside your head. This can happen when you hit your head (or something else hits it) or if you experience jolting or shaking of the head (like in whiplash). You don't need to have an impact directly to your head or lose consciousness to experience a concussion.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'VE HAD A CONCUSSION? WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?

Everyone's experience after having a concussion is different. In general symptoms might include the following symptoms:

PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	COGNITIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headache Nausea Vomiting Blurred or double vision Seeing stars or lights Balance problems Dizziness or vertigo Sensitivity to light or noise Tinnitus (ringing in ears) Pressure in the head Fatigue / drowsiness Intolerance to exertion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irritability & agitation Depression / sadness Anxiety / nervousness More emotional Difficulty sleeping, or Excessive sleepiness Apathy / low motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling "slowed down" Feeling "in a fog" or "dazed" Difficulty concentrating Difficulty remembering Difficulty word finding Impaired judgment Confusion Cognitive fatigue Intolerance for exertion

You don't need to lose consciousness or have amnesia to have a concussion, and it won't show up on a CT or MRI scan. Symptoms also don't need to be immediate and might also develop over a few days.

Concussion symptoms are normally temporary and get better over time. In most cases they resolve in a few days or weeks. If symptoms start getting worse, or if you experience any Red Flags, seek out medical help right away.

I'VE HAD A CONCUSSION, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The approach to treating and recovering from concussion is straightforward:

1. **Reduce risk of any further injury** or concussion, and avoid alcohol or recreational drug use.
2. **Physical and cognitive rest** - right after an injury has happened and for the first few days rest is the most important treatment. Consider taking time off school and work or reducing demands, and do not play sports. You should limit physical, cognitive and emotional activity as much as possible. Light activities like walking around the house are okay if they don't make symptoms worse.
3. **Seek out help and guidance from medical professionals**, especially your doctor.
4. **Gradual, graded return to activity** - after symptoms have settled over the first few days, it's time to gradually get moving and back to life. With your doctor or healthcare team's support: start with light, easy activities (walking, chores, watching TV or using computer) but only if they don't make symptoms worse. Gradually increase level of activity over time, only progressing if symptoms are manageable. Don't push too hard!