



Fact Sheet – Concussion

1. What is a Concussion?

- A concussion is a brain injury and is the most common form of traumatic brain injuries
 - ❖ A traumatic brain injury is damage to the brain that occurs after birth and is not related to a congenital disorder or a degenerative disease such as Cerebral Palsy, Alzheimer’s disease or Parkinson’s disease.

2. How do you get a Concussion?

- A concussion can be caused by a sudden acceleration of the head and neck resulting from a direct or indirect hit to the head or body including a bump, blow, jolt to the head
- Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth
- A concussion can occur from many different activities including sports but also,
 - ❖ falls
 - ❖ motor vehicle collisions
 - ❖ being struck by an object

3. Common Symptoms of a Concussion

- It is important to note that most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness

Physical

1. Dizziness or balance problems
2. Headache
3. Nausea or Vomiting
4. Fatigue/Sleep Issues
5. Sensitivity to light or sound
6. Loss of consciousness (not always)
7. Ringing in the ears

Cognitive

1. Concentration
2. Memory problems
3. Confusion
4. Feeling like you are “in a fog”

Emotional/Psychological

1. Depression
2. Anxiety
3. Impulsivity
4. Quick Temper
5. Inability to regulate emotions

4. What should one do if a concussion is suspected?

- Immediately stop/remove the person from the activity they were doing when the concussion happened
- Seek medical attention immediately

5. How long will it take to feel better?

- The majority of people begin to feel better and symptoms are alleviated within a few days to a few weeks
- About fifteen percent (15%) of people with concussion will continue to experience significant symptoms beyond three months.*
- Some people can experience troublesome symptoms for much longer, which are called persistent symptoms and can sometimes cause considerable distress for the individual and their family. *
- No two concussions are alike as many factors can contribute to the time it will take for a full recovery. This may include:
 - ❖ Severity of concussion
 - ❖ Health prior to concussion
 - ❖ Age
 - ❖ History of previous concussion(s)

6. When can one go back to work/activity?

- One needs physical and cognitive rest after a concussion, therefore it is recommended that people rest and take time off of school and/or work for 24 – 48 hours following a concussion.
- One should gradually return to activity based upon their tolerance of the activity.
- Any return to activity should be made with the advice of a doctor.

7. What is second impact syndrome?

- It is a rare condition in which a second concussion occurs before the first concussion has properly healed.
- When a second impact is sustained it may lead to severe swelling on the brain.
- It is an extremely rare condition but can be fatal.

Sources: Ontario Brain Injury Association, “Concussion Booklet”

* Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation