

'Concussions are still kind of a mysterious thing. We do know a lot more now, but there are still things that we can learn and hopefully ways and methods we can learn to either heal or to find out more about the actual extent of the injuries'  
 - Sydney Crosby,  
 Globe and Mail, Sept 5, 2013

# Restorative Health

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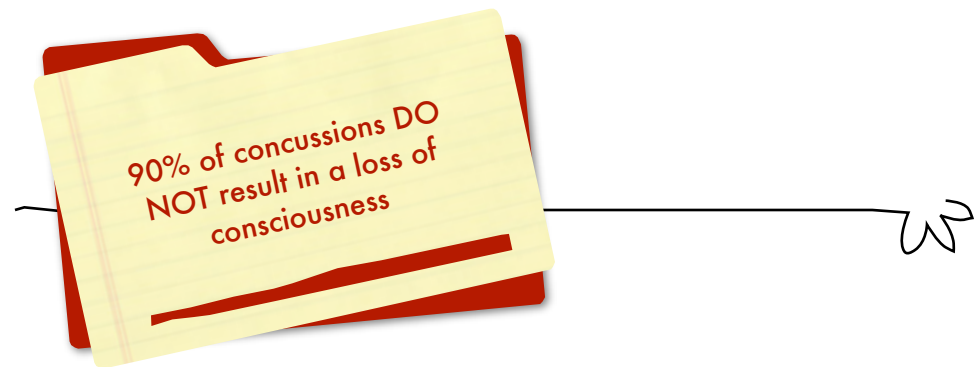
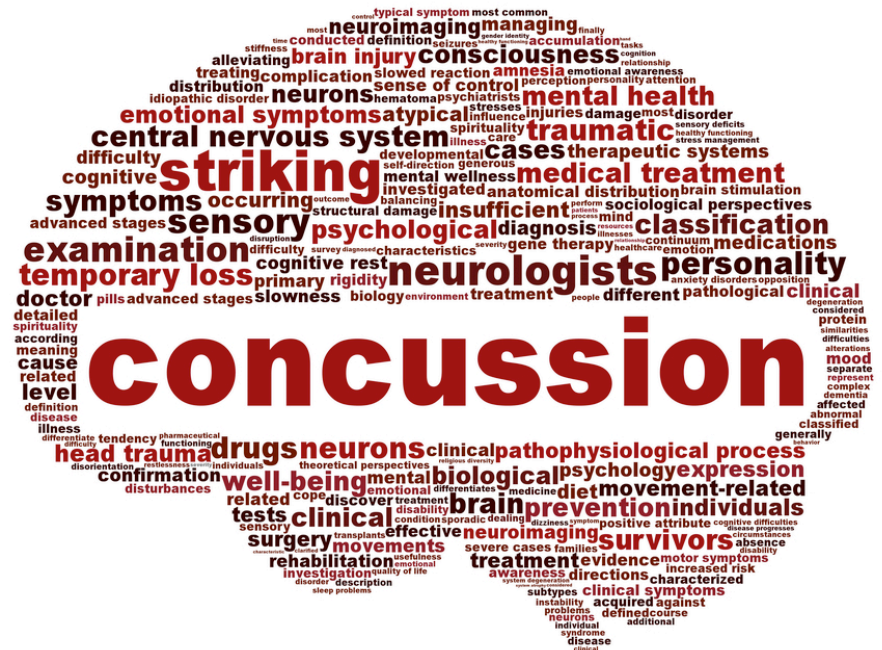
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Understanding The Signs And Symptoms of

# Concussions



# Understanding Concussions

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A concussion is “a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by biomechanical forces.” Typically experienced with an abrupt onset, it can cause short-term impairment and will usually resolve spontaneously.

Whether caused by direct impact or violent shaking of the head and neck, the brain experiences these forces within the skull, injuring the nerve cells. These injured cells now behave differently, including how they process energy to perform their job, which explains the variety of symptoms experienced during concussion recovery.

While 90% of concussions resolve within 7-10 days, the recovery time can vary, with children and adolescents often requiring a longer recovery time.

Below is a helpful guide for understanding the signs and symptoms of concussions:

Physical	Behavioural	Cognitive	Sleep Disturbance
Headache, dizziness, balance disruption, nausea/vomiting, visual disturbances, sensitivity to light or sound	Irritability, fatigue, anxiety, sadness	Confusion, amnesia, loss of consciousness, disorientation, feeling ‘in a fog,’ vacant stare, inability to focus, delayed verbal or motor responses, slurred/incoherent speech, excessive drowsiness	Trouble falling asleep Sleeping more or less than usual

**Does wearing a helmet reduce my risk of concussion?** Concussions are complex injuries. Protective equipment, such as helmets and mouthguards do not eliminate your risk of experiencing a concussion, however they can reduce the risk of structural injury to the head and face and should be used whenever possible.

**What should I do if I think I may have a concussion?** It is important to be evaluated by a health professional, such as a chiropractor, whenever a concussion is suspected and to receive appropriate management and observation. In a sporting situation, it is important to remove yourself from the game or practice immediately and not return until you are cleared to do so.

**If I feel better right away, can I return to play?** Concussion symptoms can be delayed. Therefore, the onset of any symptoms, no matter how brief, should be taken very seriously and you should stop playing sports for a minimum of 24 hours. A graduated return to play protocol that lasts approximately 7 days, supervised by a healthcare professional is recommended.

**Do children respond the same as adults?** Children under the age of 13 years need to be assessed differently than adults, and often with parental input in order to accurately identify symptoms. Also, children may have a different physiological response and require more time to recover from a concussion.

**Should I seek treatment for my head injury?** It is important for the symptoms of a concussion to be observed and managed by a healthcare professional. *In addition, recent research has shown that rehabilitation of the cervical spine (neck), which includes addressing dysfunction or injury of the joints, results in significantly greater recovery of concussion related symptoms over observation and stretching alone.* To learn more, talk to your Doctor of Chiropractic, or another professional qualified in this area.