

'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



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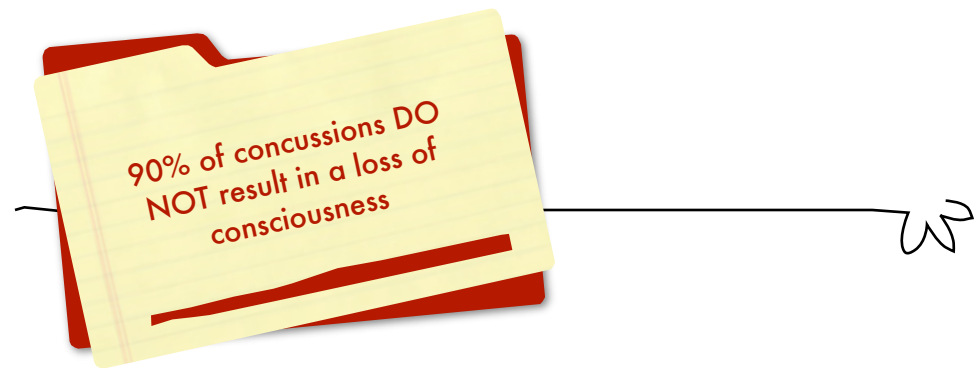
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Understanding The Signs And Symptoms of

# 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?** While protective equipment can reduce the risk of structural injury, they do not eliminate your risk of experiencing a concussion.

**What should I do if I think I may have a concussion?** If a concussion is suspected, it is important to be evaluated by a health professional. 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?** As symptoms can be delayed and progressive, they should be taken very seriously, no matter how brief. You should stop playing sports for a minimum of 24 hours and begin a supervised and graduated 7 day return to play protocol.

**Do children respond the same as adults?** Children need to be assessed differently than adults as they may have a different physiological response and require more time to recover from a concussion.

**What is the assessment and treatment I should expect from a provider trained in concussion management?** It is important to have a thorough evaluation in order to identify symptom triggers and best guide your rehabilitation. This will include a detailed interview as well as assessment of your strength and coordination, balance, visual motor skills, orthopaedic testing and neurological screening. Concussion management typically includes individualized resting strategies and home instruction, manual therapies for associated neck complaints (such as neck pain), visual motor rehabilitation and vestibular therapy. Specific return to sport/work/school strategies are also used.

To learn more, talk to your Doctor of Chiropractic, or another professional qualified in this area.