

# CONCUSSION: THE BASICS



Parachute  
Concussion Series

## What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine X-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way a person may think and remember things, and can cause a variety of symptoms. Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that jars the head, could cause a concussion.

## What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

Signs and symptoms of a concussion can appear immediately or hours after the impact. Each person might experience concussion in a different way. It is typical to experience one or more of the following:

### PHYSICAL



- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- “Pressure in the head”
- Headache
- Balance problems
- Sensitivity to light
- Neck pain
- Seizure or convulsion
- Blurred vision
- Loss of consciousness

### COGNITIVE



- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling slowed down
- Fatigue or low energy
- Difficulty remembering
- Confusion
- Drowsiness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Amnesia

### EMOTIONAL



- Irritability
- Nervous or anxious
- More emotional
- Feeling like in a “fog”
- “Don’t feel right”
- Sadness

### SLEEP



- Insomnia – unable to sleep
- Poor sleep quality
- Sleeping too much




## What should I do if I suspect a concussion?

**In all suspected cases of concussion, the person should stop the activity right away.** Continuing increases their risk of more severe, longer-lasting concussion symptoms, as well as increases their risk of other injury.

Anyone with a suspected concussion should be checked out by a medical doctor.

**If any red flag symptoms are present, get medical help immediately.** If the person is unconscious, call an ambulance. Do not move the person or remove any equipment, such as a helmet, in case of a spine injury.

### RED FLAGS



- Person complains of neck pain
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Severe or increasing headache
- Repeated vomiting
- Unusual behaviour change
- Seizure or convulsion
- Double vision
- Weakness or tingling / burning in arms or legs

## How long does a concussion last?

The symptoms of a concussion usually last one to four weeks, but may last longer. In some cases, it can take weeks or months to heal. If a person has had a concussion before, it may take them longer to heal the next time.

## How is a concussion treated?

Care for a concussion can involve a variety of treatments and a team of health professionals, depending on the symptoms and how a person's condition improves. Common recommendations would include rest in the early days, followed by a gradual return to activity under the supervision of a medical professional.

## Where can I get more information?

Parachute has resources to learn about concussion prevention, recognition, and management. Visit our website at [parachutecanada.org/concussion](http://parachutecanada.org/concussion) or download the [Concussion Ed App](#) for information on the go.