

## Concussion Guide for Community Users

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head.


Concussions can also occur from a fall or blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly.

### How can I recognize a concussion?

To help you recognize a concussion, ask the person or witnesses of the incident about:

1. *Any* kind of forceful blow to the head or to the body that resulted in rapid movement of the head.

**-and-**

2. *Any* physical change in the person's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. (See the signs and symptoms of concussion.) 

## THE FACTS:

- \* All concussions are serious.
- \* Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.
- \* Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help aid recovery and prevent further injury.

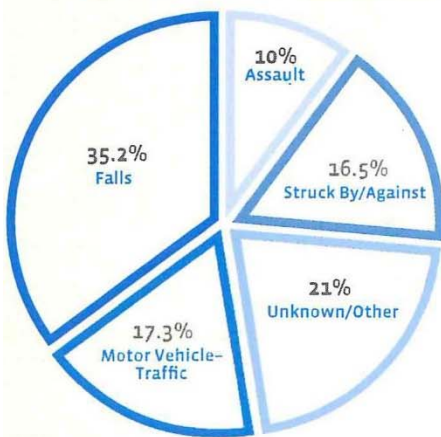


## How can concussions happen?

Children and adolescents are among those at greatest risk for concussion. Concussions can result from a fall, or any time a person's head comes into contact with a hard object, such as the floor, a desk, or another person's head or body. The potential for a concussion is greatest during activities where collisions can occur, such as during physical activity, play time, or sports activities.

A person may also get a concussion when doing activities outside of school, but then come to an activity when symptoms of the concussion are presenting. For example, a concussion from motor vehicle accident, a fall or from a sports activity.

Concussions can have a serious effect on a young, developing brain and need to be addressed correctly. Proper recognition and response to concussion signs and symptoms can prevent further injury and can help with recovery.



**Causes of Concussion**

# What are the signs and symptoms of concussion?

A person who experiences *one or more* of the signs and symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body should be seen by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.

There is no one single indicator for concussion. The signs and symptoms of concussion can take time to appear and can become more noticeable during concentration and/or activities. For this reason, it is important to watch for changes in how the person is acting or feeling, if signs or symptoms become worse, or if the person just "doesn't feel right."

## POSSIBLE SIGNS OBSERVED

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about events
- Answers questions slowly
- Repeats questions
- Can't recall events *prior* to the hit, bump, or fall
- Can't recall events *after* the hit, bump, or fall
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes

## POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY THE PERSON

### Thinking/Remembering:

- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Feeling more slowed down
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy

### Emotional:

- Irritable
- Sad
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous

### Physical:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Fatigue or feeling tired
- Blurry or double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Does not "feel right"

### Sleep\*:

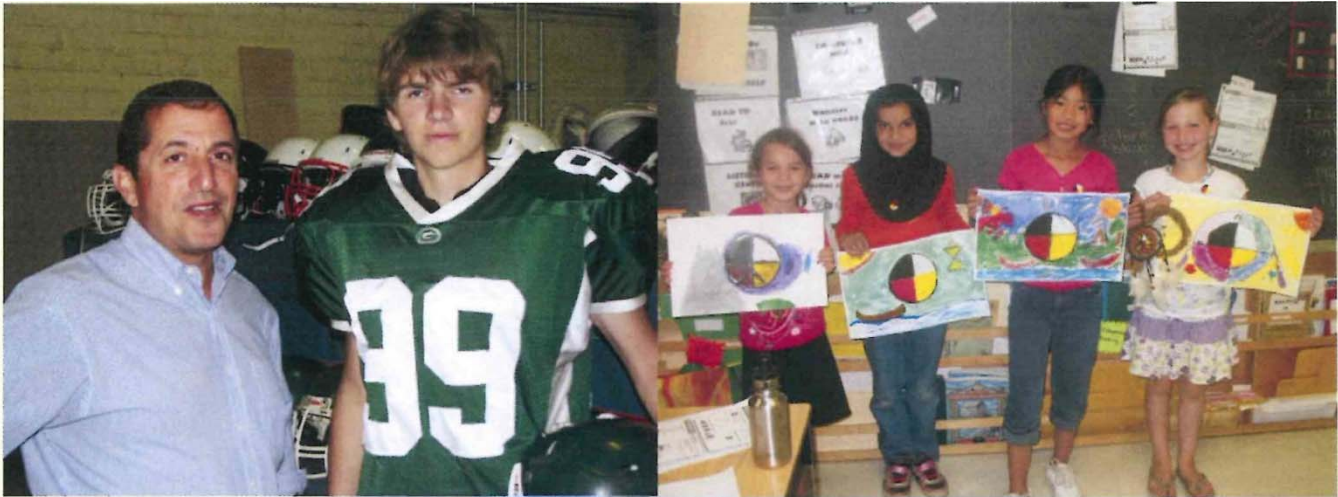
- Drowsy
- Sleeps *less* than usual
- Sleeps *more* than usual
- Has trouble falling asleep

*\*Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.*



Remember, you can't see a concussion and some people may not experience or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury. Most people with a concussion will recover quickly and fully. But for some, concussion signs and symptoms can last for days, weeks, or longer.





## What are concussion danger signs?

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. The person should be taken to an emergency department right away if s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination

- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
- Has unusual behavior
- Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

To learn more about concussion please visit: [www.ontario.ca/concussions](http://www.ontario.ca/concussions)

Watch a 5 minute video on concussion at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCCD52Pty4>