



Concussion (Adults)

- Concussion is a short-lived injury that usually completely resolves within the first 1-4 weeks.
- It can be called mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI).
- While the brain recovers it may have less energy available resulting in physical, thinking, mood, or sleep symptoms.
- Avoid activities that could cause another concussion until symptoms have resolved.
- Gradually return to daily activities as soon as possible. Avoid complete rest.
- A small number of people can take longer to recover, particularly if you have had previous concussions. Talk to your GP if you are concerned.

How to identify a concussion:

Visual Clues:

- Dazed, vacant look
- Slow to get up or lying motionless
- Loss of or decreased consciousness, disorientation
- Falling unprotected
- Unsteady on feet
- Seizures or convulsions
- Facial injury

Common symptoms:

- **Physical:** Headaches, dizziness, vision changes, nausea, noise/ light sensitivity.
- **Thinking:** Feeling foggy, reduced concentration, forgetfulness.
- **Mood / Behaviour:** Feeling down, nervous or anxious, irritable, mood swings.
- **Sleep / Fatigue:** Low energy, trouble falling asleep.

RED FLAGS

Call '000' or go straight to the Emergency Department if you develop any of the following symptoms:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| • Neck pain | • Deteriorating conscious state |
| • Increasing confusion, agitation or irritability | • Severe or increasing headache |
| • Repeated vomiting | • Unusual behaviour change |
| • Seizure or convulsion | • Loss of vision or double vision |
| • Slurred speech, difficulty swallowing | • Visible deformity of the skull |
| • Weakness or tingling in the arms or legs | • Loss of consciousness |



First 24-48 hours

- See your GP or a trained healthcare professional for review.
- For the first 24-hours, be monitored for red flags by a responsible adult.
- Reduced activity is recommended for the first 24-48 hours. Avoid complete rest, most activities of daily living can resume immediately.
- Prioritise a restful night's sleep, regular healthy snacks, and plenty of water.
- Minimise screen time (this includes TV, computers, phone, gaming).
- Avoid alcohol, non-prescription drugs, driving, air travel, strenuous exercise, and operating heavy machinery.
- Use pain relief as required for headaches.

Management after 24-48 hours

- Avoid activities that increase the risk of a repeat concussion until your symptoms have fully resolved. A repeated concussion before full recovery is likely to slow the time to recovery.
- Just like a pulled muscle, the brain needs the chance to rebuild strength. Prioritise healthy living. This includes good sleep, movement, healthy snacks, and plenty of water.
- Progress activity gradually. People who do too much or too little too soon can take longer to recover.
 - Get back to work or school as soon as possible but make modifications as needed.
 - Start doing mental (i.e., reading, cooking, or phone use) and physical activity (i.e., walking) for short periods of time.
 - Gradually increase time and intensity. Use your symptoms as a guide, a mild increase in symptoms is okay (i.e., 20% increase).
- When returning to sport, it is recommended you are reviewed by a health care professional as above and then again when you are ready to return to play. Your symptoms should have completely resolved before you return to sport.

After 4 weeks

- Contact your GP and specialist concussion clinicians to help manage concerns and guide recovery.
- If symptoms persist it is important to consider secondary factors that may explain symptoms or be slowing recovery. Think about sleep, mental health, stress, or doing too much or too little activity.

Where to seek further info

- WA Acquired Brain Injury Rehab Service: [North Metropolitan Health Service - Concussion](#)
- Australian Institute of Sport: [Concussion in Australian Sport | Concussion in Australian Sport \(concussioninsport.gov.au\)](#)
- Concussion/ Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery Advice Whakaora Tohutohu: [acc8319-concussion-education-sheet.pdf](#)

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

© North Metropolitan Health Service 2025

