

# **13 Things**

# **You May Not Know About Concussions**



## **Managing the Invisible Injury**



**Southeast Physiotherapy**

## 13 Things You May Not Know About Concussions



**SOUTHEAST  
PHYSIOTHERAPY**

**It is common for people to assume a concussion is a bruise to the brain.  
This is incorrect.**

### **1. So, what IS a concussion?**

A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by the head accelerating and decelerating. This may be the result of a direct hit to the head or a whiplash-type injury.

### **2. How is a concussion Diagnosed?**

Diagnostics will not identify any abnormalities after a concussion is sustained, as it is a stretching/shearing injury. This includes x-ray, CT Scans, and MRI Tests. Doctors may request these diagnostic tests to rule out more severe injuries, (i.e.: brain bleed, skull fracture).

### **3. What are the Symptoms that are common with concussion?**

Headache	Pressure in Head	Dizziness
Blurred Vision	Sensitivity to Light	Fatigue
Drowsiness	Sensitivity to Noise	Neck Pain
Nausea	Balance Problems	Fogginess
Irritability	Feeling Slowed Down	Confusion
Sadness	Nervous/Anxious	Not Feeling Right
Trouble Falling Asleep	Difficulty Remembering	Difficulty Concentrating
More Emotional		

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### 4. What if You're Unsure?

If in doubt...sit them out! If a concussion is suspected, it is recommended that the athlete does not continue to play and is assessed by a health care practitioner with a specialization in concussion care as soon as possible.

### Symptoms

5. Initial symptoms typically worsen over the course of the first 3-5 days post-injury. This is due to a drastic decrease in energy available to the brain.
6. Most people recovering from a concussion are symptom-free around day 7-10 post-injury. Research has shown that the brain does not return to pre-injury energy levels until 2-4 weeks post-injury.
7. This gap is considered the 'vulnerable period' where another concussion would result in 'second impact syndrome'. This typically results in a much-delayed recovery, but has also led to brain injury and death.

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### Recovery

8. Recovery of a concussion follows a **10-step approach**, including returning to school/work, then to sport. Each step requires 24 hours before moving onto the next step.
9. The walking treadmill test must be passed at Stage 5, which results in return to physical activity without contact. Athletes must pass an exertional test at Stage 8 to receive full clearance for contact and game play.
10. Concussion symptoms that last for longer than 30 days are considered Post-Concussion Syndrome

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### 11. Post Concussion Syndrome

The following can treat post-Concussion Syndrome:

- A. Exercise therapy- increasing your heart rate to challenge the energy deficit in the brain
- B. Visual-Vestibular therapy- exercises for the eyes and balance centres of the brain
- C. Manual therapy- treatment to the neck muscles and joints
- D. Education & Reassurance
- E. Diet & Nutritional Counselling- learning what foods promote healthy brain functioning and healing

### 12. Baseline Testing

A pre-injury Baseline Test includes comprehensive testing using objective measures of your healthy brain. These results can be used to determine IF a concussion was sustained when there is no clear mechanism of injury. An athlete must also match or beat their Baseline Test prior to full clearance for contact and game play.

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**13. Remember to book your Baseline Test prior to your sport season!**