

# WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?



**A concussion is a type of mild traumatic brain injury from a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes:**

- The head and brain to move quickly back and forth
- The brain to bounce or twist in the skull from this sudden movement
- Chemical changes in the brain, and sometimes stretching and damage to the brain cells

## SYMPTOMS

Concussion symptoms may appear during the normal healing process, and will generally improve over time. Most people with a concussion feel better within 3-4 weeks. Some symptoms may appear right away, while other symptoms may not appear for hours or days after the injury.

**If there are any symptoms that concern you, or are getting worse, you may need immediate care.**



### THINKING OR REMEMBERING

- Attention or concentration problems
- Feeling slowed down
- Foggy or groggy
- Problems with short- or long-term memory
- Trouble thinking clearly



### SOCIAL OR EMOTIONAL

- Anxiety or nervousness
- Irritability or easily angered
- Feeling more emotional
- Sadness



### SLEEP

- Sleeping less than usual
- Sleeping more than usual
- Trouble falling asleep



### PHYSICAL

- Bothered by light or noise
- Dizziness or balance problems
- Feeling tired, no energy
- Headaches
- Nausea or vomiting (early on)
- Vision problems

# REST RIGHT AFTER THE INJURY

Take it easy the first few days after the injury when symptoms are more severe. This allows your brain time to heal.

## WITHIN A FEW DAYS

As you start to feel better (and within a few days after the injury), you can gradually return to regular (non-strenuous) activities if they don't make your concussion symptoms worse.

- Early on, limit physical and cognitive (thinking or remembering) activities to avoid causing symptoms to worsen.
- Take naps or rest breaks during the day as needed.
- Find relaxing activities at home (such as reading and drawing). Avoid activities that put you at risk for another injury to the head and brain throughout the course of recovery.
- Return to work gradually. If symptoms do not worsen during an activity, then this activity is OK for you. If symptoms worsen, cut back on that activity until it is tolerated.
- Try to get in some outside time, such as taking short walks.
- Good sleep heals your brain. Avoid screen time and loud music before bed and sleep in a dark room. Try to go to bed at night and wake up in the morning at the same times each day.



**If you are having a difficult recovery, talk with your employer about support services that may be available.**

**For most people, only short-term changes or support services are needed as they recover from a concussion.**

## IF SYMPTOMS PERSIST

Concussion symptoms are a normal part of recovery and usually go away on their own. For some individuals however, symptoms last longer than expected. If your symptoms persist beyond four weeks, contact a medical professional or NDBIN for resources on concussion management.

The information provided in this handout is not a substitute for medical or professional care. Questions about diagnosis and treatment for a concussion should be directed to your healthcare provider.