

# Concussion

## What you need to know

### What is a concussion?

A concussion is a mild injury to the brain that can happen when you get a significant shake or bump to the head. If you suspect you have had a concussion, it's important to check in with your doctor/GP. You don't need to experience a blackout to have a concussion.

It can take time to feel better because your brain might be affected. You should start feeling better in a few days, and most people feel better within 4 weeks.



### Symptoms and recovery

There are some ongoing symptoms that are common when you have been concussed. Keep in mind that recovery can be up and down and some symptoms may not show up straight away. You may have good days and bad days. Check in with your doctor if you are still having symptoms for longer than a week or 2.

	Things you may notice	What you can do
<b>Thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trouble focusing</li> <li>• Feeling slow or foggy</li> <li>• Trouble remembering things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take extra time to do things.</li> <li>• Use a diary, whiteboard, or phone app to remind you of important things.</li> <li>• Do one thing at a time.</li> <li>• Take more breaks during and between activities.</li> <li>• <b>Check in with your doctor if you are still having symptoms for longer than a week or 2.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Neck pain</li> <li>• Feeling dizzy</li> <li>• Feeling sick</li> <li>• Being sensitive to light or noise</li> <li>• Trouble with balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradually return to your usual activities.</li> <li>• As long as it doesn't make your symptoms much worse, you can start doing easy physical activities like walking or riding a stationary bike.</li> <li>• Most headache pain responds to paracetamol. Avoid NSAIDs and aspirin if you are on a blood thinner.</li> <li>• A physiotherapist may be able to help with physical problems such as neck pain and dizziness.</li> <li>• <b>Check in early with your doctor if you have symptoms for longer than a week or 2.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Fatigue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling very tired</li> <li>• Needing more sleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take things slow if you need to.</li> <li>• Spread out your tasks over the day, night, and week.</li> <li>• It is important to slowly increase the activity you do but take lots of rest breaks.</li> </ul>
<b>Emotions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling more frustrated or annoyed</li> <li>• Feeling more emotional or sad</li> <li>• Feeling anxious or worried</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do activities that you enjoy and that help you feel relaxed.</li> <li>• Do gentle, steady exercise like walking.</li> <li>• Avoid activities that put you at risk of bumps to the head, e.g. contact sports.</li> <li>• Talk to family and close friends about how you feel.</li> <li>• Ask your doctor or psychologist for help.</li> </ul>
<b>Sleep</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleeping more or less than normal</li> <li>• Having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to wake up and go to bed at the same time every day.</li> <li>• Keep your bedroom just for sleeping and keep phones and tablets in another room.</li> <li>• Keep your environment quiet and cool.</li> <li>• Avoid alcohol and drinks with caffeine.</li> </ul>

Some people may have ongoing symptoms. These are called **persisting post-concussion symptoms**.



## Treatment

If a paramedic or doctor helped you at the time of your injury, they would have checked how your brain and body were working.

After a concussion, you may have been told to:

- not drive for the first 24 hours, then slowly return to driving if your symptoms have gone
- not play contact sports until cleared by your health professional
- start to slowly return to school/work; you may need a period of time off work or modification to your job as you recover
- take medicine for headaches, pain and nausea if you need to
- Limit screen time, especially in the first 48 hours after your injury as spending too much time looking at a screen (e.g. phone, tablet, or computer) can make your brain tired and could slow down your recovery
- Avoid alcohol and recreational drugs for at least 48 hours.

## Next steps

### Visit your General Practitioner (GP)

1-2 weeks after your injury

Your GP will check you're recovering and give you information on getting back to your normal activities. Many people start to feel better in the first couple of weeks. It's normal for symptoms to get a little worse when you do more activities.

4 weeks after your injury (if you still don't feel well)

Some people may have symptoms after 4 weeks and need support. It's important to talk to your GP about getting more help. If your symptoms don't improve over time or stop you from doing your usual activities, ask your GP if concussion services are available in your area.

If your concussion happened from a fall, talk to a doctor about ways to reduce the risk of falling again. If your concussion happened while playing sports, there may be special rules for returning to play. You might need to get approval from a doctor, like your GP, before playing again. For more information on returning to sport, please refer to the Return to Sport fact sheets located at the below websites.

## If you show any of these symptoms, go to your nearest Emergency Department or call Triple Zero (000):



Fainting, blackouts and/or inability to wake up



Acting strange and saying things that do not make sense



Severe headache



Frequent vomiting



Unable to remember large chunks of time including not recognising people or places



Seizures



Unable to move your arms or legs



Blurred or double vision

**Disclaimer:** A concussion should be diagnosed by a doctor or other health professional. This health information is for general education purposes only. Always consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for you. 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) provides health information, referral and triage services to the public in all parts of Queensland and is available 24/7. In a medical emergency, go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department or call Triple Zero (000).

## More information



[Anzconcuisionguidelines.com](http://Anzconcuisionguidelines.com)



[Kidsconcuision.com.au](http://Kidsconcuision.com.au)



[Connectivity.org.au](http://Connectivity.org.au)



If you're a GP, head to HealthPathways for more information.



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