

Concussion

What's in this patient handout?

- An overview of concussion and warning signs
- What to consider in the first 24-48 hours after injury
- Post-concussion symptoms
- Treatment aims
- Physical therapies
- Nutritional and herbal recommendations

An overview of concussion

Concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury, usually not life-threatening, with a recovery period of a few weeks. Causes for concussion can include blows to the head, motor vehicle accidents or a hit to the body, causing rapid back and forth movements to the brain and head. This blunt force can lead to damaged brain cells. There is a small risk of developing complications after blunt head trauma. It is advisable that you remain in the company of another person in the first 24 hours of the incident seek, diagnosis for support where there are warning signs.

Warning signs

- Feeling faint or drowsy
- Acting strangely, clumsiness
- Constant headache
- Vomiting more than twice
- Confusion, passing out
- Blurred vision, slurred speech
- Fluid or bleeding from ear or nose

What to consider in the first 24-48 hours after injury

Return to hospital if you experience any warning signs.

- Do not take medication, including aspirin or anti-inflammatories, unless advised by your doctor to avoid potential complications
- Rest/sleep, ensure you are getting checked on every 2 - 3 hours to detect potential problems
- Avoid alcohol or sleeping pills as they might interfere with the healing process
- Avoid driving for at least 24 hours



Some people may experience post concussive symptoms, however these should resolve within a few weeks. If there is no improvement of symptoms within 4 weeks, your doctor may refer you to a specialist for further examination. The return to normal daily activities will depend on the rate of your recovery and should happen carefully and gradually.

Post-concussion symptoms

- Balance problems
- Nausea and dizziness
- Mild and persistent headaches
- Attention, concentration and memory difficulties
- Mood swings, anxiety and depression
- Increased sensitivity to sound or light
- Increased fatigue and tiredness

Concussion is an acute injury and prompt medical assistance is important. The aim of complementary treatment is to support the healing process. Patients are usually advised to:

- Rest and have adequate sleep to help brain recovery
- Take time off work or study as required
- Take it easy when participating in sports, especially contact sports - a new head injury could be dangerous
- Continue monitoring symptoms and report back to their healthcare practitioner

Treatment aims

- Ensure safety of the patient during the recovery phase
- Support healing process of brain cells for optimal recovery
- Decrease pain and other symptoms to ensure better quality of life
- Relieve post-concussion symptoms



Physical therapies

- Please only commence physical therapies post-acute concussion and after clearance from GP.

Craniosacral therapy

- Improves blood flow and circulation to aid healing
- May help reduce pain, particularly in the neck region, as well as improve sleep quality and memory scores

Buteyko deep breathing technique

- May increase blood oxygenation and improves brain function and may help in acute and chronic stage of concussion to ensure adequate breathing

Yoga and meditation

- Might help to decrease fatigue, improve cognitive performance, and support pain management.

Acupuncture

- Might help improved sleep quality and cognition.

Nutritional and herbal recommendations

- Please only commence nutritional and herbal therapies post-acute concussion and after clearance from GP.

Reduce oxidative stress and inflammation

- Avoid inflammatory foods including highly processed and high sugar foods and beverages
- Follow a Mediterranean diet which ensures adequate intake of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory foods

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)

- May be beneficial for decreasing inflammation

Vitamin C

- Adequate intake of vitamin C containing foods can help the healing process and potentially improve pain

Curcumin (*Curcuma longa*)

- May be beneficial for improving motor and learning performance and decreasing inflammation

Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*)

- May help to improve blood flow to the brain

N-Acetylcysteine (NAC)

- May reduce inflammation and oxidative stress
- May be beneficial as a short-term countermeasure in concussion
- Further research is required

Homeopathic remedies

- May help to stimulate the body's self-healing process. A homeopathic practitioner should be consulted for a personalised recommendation
- Rescue remedy, Star of Bethlehem (Bach Flower), Fringed Violet (Australian Bush Flower) are energetic remedies to support emotional recovery after traumatic experiences

Seek Medical Care

Treatment recommendations should be carried out concomitant to, and not replace medical treatment. Please consult your medical doctor for advice with compatibility of nutritional/herbal recommendation and any medicine you take.