CONCUSSION
Adults

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI)

ONTOARIO BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION
education • awareness • support
The Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) is a non-profit charitable organization whose mission is to enhance the lives of Ontarians living with the effects of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) through education, awareness and support.

OBIA provides a variety of services for people living with brain injury, caregivers and professionals, including: Peer Support; numerous ABI training programs delivered in the community and online; and support and advocacy through our toll free support line. We also facilitate linkages to local community resources including connection to the brain injury association in their community.

For more information about OBIA please visit: www.obia.ca

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What is a Concussion?

Concussion is a brain injury which can be caused by a sudden acceleration of the head and neck resulting from a blow or contact to the body. You do not need to lose consciousness to have sustained a concussion. Concussions can occur from many different activities including falls, assault, motor vehicle collisions, sports or being struck by an object. Symptoms can appear immediately or, in some cases, days following the initial injury.

Anatomy of a Concussion

Concussions occur with sudden linear (Coup Contrecoup) and/or rotational acceleration of the head, which causes the brain to move within the skull. It is this movement of the brain that stretches and even tears neural tissue of the brain and produces the symptoms of concussions.

**Linear**
1. Direct impact stops the head’s forward motion.
2. The brain keeps moving, colliding with the inside of the skull and injuring the frontal lobe.
3. The brain recoils, crashing into the back of the skull injuring the occipital lobe.

**Rotational**
A lateral impact, like a cross-punch in boxing, spins the brain on its axis, stretching or tearing neurons.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The following are some of the most common symptoms a person can experience with a concussion. **No** two concussions are the same and you may experience some or all of these symptoms.

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<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Poor Concentration</td>
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**Symptoms**

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What Should I Do?

If you think you have sustained a concussion, you should:

**Immediately** stop/remove yourself from the activity you were doing when the concussion happened.

*Seek medical advice/attention immediately.*

You should not drive for at least 24 hours.

Generally, concussions cannot be seen on CT scans or MRIs. CT scans and MRIs are useful to identify any structural damage. (ie. skull fracture, bleeding)

Cognitive and physical rest is important for the first 24 - 48 hours after sustaining a concussion. Full bed rest should not exceed three days and a gradual return to activities should begin as soon as tolerated.

Symptoms can/may worsen over the next few days. A person should see their doctor before returning to their current level of activity (ie. work, school, etc.). It is highly recommended that you are followed by a doctor who is knowledgable in dealing with concussion/mTBI.
How Long Will it Take to Feel Better?

The majority of people who sustain a concussion begin to feel better and symptoms are alleviated within a few days to weeks. There is a small percentage of the population whose symptoms can persist for months or longer. This is called post-concussion syndrome (PCS).

*If symptoms persist, it is important to see your doctor for follow-up and monitoring.*

Many factors can contribute to the time it will take for full recovery. These factors can include:

* Severity of concussion
* Health prior to concussion
* Age
* History of prior concussion(s)
When Can I Go Back to Work/Activity?

Physical and cognitive rest are important during recovery from a concussion. In order to achieve cognitive rest, time off from work or school is recommended especially during the first 24 - 48 hours after sustaining a concussion.

After sustaining a concussion, people should be encouraged to gradually return to activity based upon their tolerance of the activity. When planning on returning to an activity, your tolerance or threshold for the activity should strongly be considered. If you have returned to work/school and you are experiencing a mild elevation of your symptoms, that increase should not incapacitate you or lead to a decrease in functioning the next day.

Work together with your employer/school and doctor to create a slow return to work/activity plan. A strong collaborative team can aid in a smoother transition with an increased chance of success.

Any return to activity should be made with the advice of a doctor.
What About Legal Issues?

If the concussion was sustained in a motor vehicle collision, contact your insurance provider within seven days and be sure to contact a personal injury lawyer who has experience with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) immediately.

If you need further support in finding this type of legal assistance in your area, please contact the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) at 1-800-263-5404.

What is Second Impact Syndrome?

Second impact syndrome is a rare condition in which a second concussion occurs before the first concussion has properly healed. When a second impact is sustained, it may lead to severe swelling of the brain.

Although it is an extremely rare condition, it is often fatal. It has occurred primarily in younger athletes injured during play.

This is one of the reasons why it is so important to remove yourself from activity and seek medical attention.
Where Can I Get Help?

Online Concussion Support Group

Do you have a Concussion?

OBIA is pleased to announce the launch of our ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP FOR ADULTS (18 and older) living with Concussion:

- Providing support and sharing information about brain injury and concussion
- Delivered online and available throughout Ontario
- Free and confidential

For more information or to register for an upcoming group contact 1-800-263-5404 or support@obia.on.ca
Ontario Brain Injury Association
www.obia.ca

Ministry of Health

Concussions Ontario
www.concussionsontario.org/

Sunnybrook Health Sciences- mTBI/Concussion Handbook
sunnybrook.ca/content/?page=bsp-brain-injury-education

Disclaimer:
The information contained in this brochure is for informational purposes only and in no way should replace the advice given by a doctor. If you suspect that you or someone you know has sustained a concussion, seek immediate medical attention.