

# CONCUSSION

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that may be caused by a blow to the head, neck, or elsewhere on the body where the force is transmitted to the head.

Concussion typically results in an immediate onset of short-lived signs and symptoms. In some people however, symptoms do not occur for minutes to hours after impact. Most people have no loss of consciousness.

If you suspect you have suffered a concussion you should stop the sport/activity straight away and inform your coach or other responsible person. You should not return to play that day and should not return until you have medical clearance.

Continuing to play increases your risk of more severe, longer lasting concussion as well as increasing your risk of other injury.

You should not be left alone after the injury. In some cases, the signs and symptoms of concussion may evolve over several minutes to hours. You may not realise you have problems until you try to do your usual activities again.

**Remember most people with concussion recover fully and quickly (average 14 days) but everyone's concussion experience is different**

## Symptoms of concussion may include

PHYSICAL	THINKING	EMOTIONAL/MOOD	SLEEP
Headaches	Hard time remembering or	Irritability	Drowsiness
Vomiting	focusing	Anger	Difficulty Falling
Dizziness	Hard to retain new information	Mood swings	Asleep
Sensitivity to	Trouble thinking clearly	Feeling nervous/anxious	
light/noise	Feeling slowed down	Feeling sad	
Low energy/feeling	Loss of short-term memory		
tired			
Balance disturbance			
Visual problems			

## **WARNING SIGNS/RED FLAGS**

You should call a doctor or attend Accident and Emergency if you have any of these symptoms:

- Worsening or severe headaches
- Repeated vomiting
- Increasing confusion
- Significant drowsiness; a hard time staying awake
- Trouble walking-worsening balance or weakness of legs/arms
- Strange behaviour/Agitation
- Seizures
- Any symptom that concerns you, your family members, or friends

### **How to feel better**

It is recommended that you have an initial period of rest after suffering a concussion of between 24 to 48 hours.

After this brief period of rest a sensible approach involves the gradual return to university and social activities as tolerated. Low grade symptoms are to be expected.

People who have suffered a concussion often feel tired and may experience difficulties at work or school when carrying out tasks which require concentration. You may find you need to take more breaks or will need more time to complete tasks

### **Remember**

Avoid Alcohol - it may delay recovery and put you at increased risk for further injury.

Maintain normal sleep patterns- avoid napping.

Keep hydrated and eat well.

If you need pain relief for headaches use paracetamol or ibuprofen or call your doctor if pain is persisting

Complete rest or symptom avoidance for an indefinite amount of time should be avoided. Continue social activities including bright lights/noisy café as tolerated-if symptoms worsen take a break.

Recovery from concussion should not be rushed, nor should you feel pressure to resume playing until recovery is complete.

Returning too soon puts you at risk of further concussions or other injuries. It is better to have missed 1 game rather than the whole season.

If you have persisting symptoms or no improvement in your tolerance levels, contact the UCC Student Health Department 021 4902311 to get further advice/treatment.

**Return to university full time must be complete before returning to contact sport.**

Post-concussion you should follow the stepwise approach below.

Adult players usually take 14+ days before returning to full contact training.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>1.</b> <i>(24-48 hours)</i>	<b>Symptom-limited activity</b>	An initial period of rest, participating in your usual daily activities, as long as no symptoms are provoked.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Light aerobic exercise</b>	Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace.  No resistance training
<b>3</b>	<b>Sport-specific exercise</b>	Running drills.  No head impact activities
<b>4</b>	<b>Non-contact training drills</b>	Non-contact sport specific drills.  May start progressive resistance training
<b>5</b>	<b>Full-contact practice</b>	Following medical clearance, participate in normal training activities  <i>Adult players usually take 14+ days before returning to full contact training.</i>
<b>6</b>	<b>Return to play</b>	Normal game play