

Concussion Information

What is a concussion? A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a fall or blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Sports injuries, car accidents, and falls are common causes of concussions. A concussion or mild traumatic brain injury can cause a variety of cognitive, physical, and emotional symptoms. Concussions can range from minor to severe and can occur even if a person does not lose consciousness. All concussions, regardless of the severity, share one common factor – they temporarily interfere with the way the brain works.

What are the symptoms of a concussion? The symptoms of a concussion as well as the onset and duration of concussion symptoms vary in every individual. Some individuals who sustain a concussion may be symptomatic only for a couple of days, while other individuals may be symptomatic for several weeks or even months. Some concussion symptoms may include:

- Difficulty concentrating and focusing
- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty remembering new information
- Dizziness or trouble with balance
- Difficulties sleeping
- Feeling sluggish, tired, groggy, or “slowed down”

- Headache
- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sensitivity to noise or light
- Mood swings

How does a person recover from a concussion? Most concussions get better with time, but it can be a long recovery process. Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. Ignoring symptoms and trying to “tough it out” often makes the symptoms worse and will delay the brain’s recovery. Because we want our students to recover as quickly as possible from their concussions, we often will temporarily place these concussed students on **strict brain rest**.

What is strict brain rest? Brain rest means that during the specified time frame we want our concussed students to sleep as much as possible during the night and rest as much as they can during the day. **In addition to avoiding any activity that requires sustained focus and concentration, we also want our concussed students to avoid any physical activity** (e.g., running, jumping, dancing, etc) **that “jostles” the brain.** During this specified time frame, students are given the following restrictions:

- Do NOT attend class or listen to class lectures.
- Do NOT read, write, or study
- Do NOT work on your computer (including email or video games) or spend times on mobile devices like cell phones (texting)
- Do NOT listen to loud music or other loud noises
- Do NOT spend a long period of time talking or socializing
- Do NOT take any over the counter or prescription pain med (e.g., Aspirin or Advil) without the approval of a medical provider
- Do NOT do activities that are physically demanding (e.g., sports, prolonged walking, heavy housecleaning, or working out)
- **Do NOT drive a car or motor scooter, ride a bike or skateboard**
- **Do NOT drink any alcohol or use any other potentially mind altering substance**

Warning signs that suggest a concussed person needs to seek immediate medical attention (day or night):

- Excessive lethargy (e.g., not able to stay awake) or progressive confusion (e.g., not recognizing familiar people or places)
- Poor speech (e.g., slurred, garbled or incoherent speech)
- Poor coordination or worsening balance
- New weakness, numbness or tingling in the arms, legs or face. Any loss of bowel or bladder control.
- Recurrent vomiting (more than 3 times)
- Clear, pink, or bloody drainage from the ears or nose
- Any convulsions or seizure-like activity (e.g., uncontrolled shaking or repetitive twitching)
- Progressive worsening of your headache

If a student’s family member, professor, friend, or peer is concerned about the behavior of the concussed student, the wisest course of action is to encourage the student to be evaluated immediately at our WFU Student Health Service.

If a student’s concussion symptoms seem to be adversely impacting the student’s ability to be successful in his or her academic courses, we encourage students to seek support and advice from the WFU Learning Assistance Center (phone 336-758-5929).