

## Module B: Recognize

This module presents information on:

- how to recognize a concussion, including
- common signs and symptoms, and
- how to identify Red Flags for more serious injury.

Any force that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull has the potential to cause a concussion. A concussion should be suspected for anyone who sustains a direct hit to the head, or receives a hard hit or jolt to the body.

All potential concussions should be treated seriously, and it is important to understand that the severity of the impact is not necessarily an indication of the severity of the concussion. Each concussion is unique and each person may experience different symptoms.

A concussion can result in a variety of physical, behavioural, emotional, and cognitive signs and symptoms. Signs are what you can see, such as stumbling, while symptoms are what the person is experiencing and telling you about, such as a headache.

Immediate signs of a concussion can include: loss of consciousness, lying motionless, slow to get up, stumbling, balance problems, lack of coordination, holding the head, appearing dazed and confused, and slurred speech.

Physical symptoms can include: headache, nausea, blurry or double vision, seeing stars or lights, dizziness or vertigo, sensitivity to light or noise, ringing in the ears, and neck pain.

Behavioural and emotional signs and symptoms can include: drowsiness or fatigue, irritability, sadness, depression, and anxiety.

Cognitive signs and symptoms can include: feeling 'slowed down', 'a step behind', 'in a fog' or 'dazed'; and difficulty concentrating or remembering.

Sleep problems can include difficulty falling asleep or sleeping more than usual.

Signs and symptoms can appear immediately, or may emerge in the hours or up to 2 days following the event. It is important to understand that loss of consciousness is not common. Actually, in most cases, a person sustaining a concussion will not lose consciousness.

If someone with a suspected head injury has any of the following Red Flags within the first 48 hours after the event, immediate assessment by an emergency department physician is required:

- Neck pain or tenderness;
- Double vision;
- Weakness, or feelings of tingling or burning in the arms or legs;
- Severe or worsening headache;
- Seizure or convulsion;
- Loss of consciousness;
- Deteriorating conscious state, with the person becoming groggy or slow to respond;
- Vomiting; and
- Becoming increasingly restless, agitated, or combative.

Continue to the quiz to test your knowledge on recognizing a concussion.