



Post-Concussion Syndrome



What is post-concussion syndrome?

A concussion is caused by direct or indirect trauma to the brain. It can be considered a mild traumatic brain injury because of the impact of the brain hitting the skull and the shearing force on the brain. Concussions are now a more common and serious problem among athletes. Many of these individuals can suffer from post-concussion syndrome, which leads to cognitive, balance, and visual problems. The concussion causes chemical changes in the brain that alters its ability to function properly ultimately leading to an energy crisis within the brain. After concussions, your brain needs more energy to function.

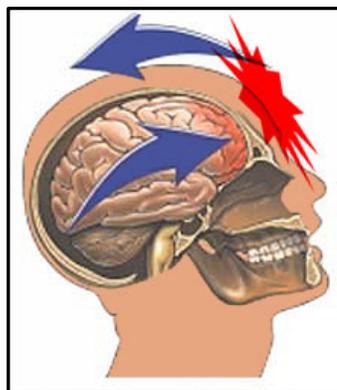
What is the recovery process?

Due to the energy crisis within the brain, post-concussion treatment starts with physical and cognitive rest because your brain is susceptible to further damage during initial recovery. During the rest phase, patients should avoid physical activity such as exercising. Cognitive activities to avoid are any heavy concentration or focusing skills that include use of computers, cell phones, or job-related reasoning skills. Your physician and physical therapist will help you gradually return to normal activities.

What are common signs and symptoms of post-concussion syndrome?

Signs and symptoms can last hours, days or even months. They can also appear immediately or within several days after the injury. Some examples are:

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Neck pain
- Fogginess/difficulty concentrating
- Visual blurring/double vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Memory problems
- Balance problems



What does physical therapy do?

- Education - good sleeping and eating habits, gradual return to school, work, and sports, and how to avoid aggravating symptoms
- Balance and proprioception
- Vestibular - decrease dizziness
- Oculomotor - improve visual acuity
- Neck ROM and postural strength and endurance