

## WHO NEEDS TO KNOW & WHY

If a student sustains a concussion at home or at school, parents need to seek medical attention immediately, and inform their child's school of the outcome as soon as possible.

Teachers need to be aware of the physical, cognitive, academic, emotional, and behavioural outcomes of concussion so they can accommodate students with concussion in their classrooms. Outcomes may be subtle and temporary, but may significantly impact a student's performance. Teachers can objectively evaluate pre- and post- concussion academic, emotional, behavioural, and social performance. Development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be necessary.

PE teachers and coaches need to be particularly aware of the signs, symptoms, and outcomes of concussion because the risk of concussion is higher when students are engaged in athletics. There is a higher risk of re-injury when a student is symptomatic.

For students who experience persistent symptoms, a referral to an interdisciplinary rehab team for further assessment, including a neuropsychological assessment, is appropriate.

It is important to:

- **Recognize the concussion and its outcomes;**
- **Reassure the student that everything will be done to accommodate their difficulties; and**
  - **Expect a positive outcome.**

teenconcussion.vch.ca



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## G.F. STRONG REHABILITATION CENTRE

- **Adolescent & Young Adult Program**  
604-734-1313  
Interdisciplinary Rehab program for youth
- **Adolescent Complex Concussion Clinic**  
604-734-1313  
Interdisciplinary service treating youth with complex concussions
- **G.F. Strong School Program (VSB)**  
604-737-6420  
School support for youth patients of G.F. Strong

**CHECK OUT  
OUR NEW ONLINE  
RESOURCE FOR  
TEENAGERS  
WITH CONCUSSIONS**

**[teenconcussion.vch.ca](http://teenconcussion.vch.ca)**

### My Guide: Concussion (Teen Edition)

Teens have specific concussion needs!

Use our new customizable website to gain information and help guide your concussion recovery.



## Teaching Kids with Concussion

Concussion = Brain Injury

A Guide for Classroom Teachers

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Created by the G.F. Strong School Program  
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## What is a Concussion?

A concussion is an injury to the brain caused by a blow or jolt to the head, face or neck. A concussion causes disruption of normal brain functioning. Contrary to popular belief, an individual does not have to lose consciousness to sustain a concussion.

Concussions can occur in sports (eg: rugby, boxing, cycling, and soccer), or as the result of a motor vehicle crash, an assault, or a fall.

A concussion is a brain injury, and all brain injuries should be taken seriously.

## Symptoms

Symptoms can vary from one person to another and can last for minutes, hours or weeks.

**You may see some of these symptoms immediately:**

- Nausea/Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Stumbling and/or clumsiness
- Disorientation
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Headache
- Unusual drowsiness
- Slurred speech
- Numbness in arms or legs

**You may see some of these symptoms over time:**

- Persisting headaches
- Fatigue
- Dizziness/Light headedness
- Increased sensitivity to light and noise
- Reduced memory
- Reduced concentration/Increased distractibility
- Irritability and low frustration tolerance
- Anxiety and/or depression
- Sleep disturbance

## Recovery

Recovery from concussion varies. Most people recover completely from a concussion. However, a small percentage will continue to experience one or more symptoms. During recovery, symptoms can interfere with school performance and limit participation in other activities.

## Back to School

Students often return to school immediately following a concussion. School staff need to be aware of the following possible issues:

### PHYSICAL:

- Physical or cognitive fatigue
- Sensitivity to light and noise/Headaches
- Increased fatigue as the day and week progresses

### COGNITIVE/ACADEMIC:

- Decreased academic achievement
- Attendance issues
- Late or incomplete homework
- Restlessness and/or difficulty concentrating
- Short-term memory issues (struggling to learn new information; forgetting instructions for assignments; appearing disorganized)
- Slowed information processing (slow to answer questions; taking longer to get work done)
- Difficulty multitasking (taking notes)
- Difficulty understanding concepts
- Difficulty organizing and expressing thoughts/ideas

### BEHAVIOURAL/EMOTIONAL:

- Changes in behaviour, mood and motivation
- Increased anger, frustration, and irritability
- Tendency to get upset and/or cry easily
- Social issues (disagreements with peers)
- Changes in attitude towards school (less interest, increased anxiety)

## Strategies

Having appropriate accommodations, strategies, and supports are essential as students recover. These will need to be adjusted as recovery takes place.

**Students with concussion may benefit from the following while recovering:**

- Taking a few days or weeks off school
- Returning to school gradually, starting with shorter days
- Having reduced academic expectations and course/assignment load
- Having a case manager/learning support teacher as a primary contact who: monitors the student's progress and the appropriateness of strategies; and stays in touch with the student's parents
- Participating in light aerobic activities rather than sports or regular PE and NO CONTACT SPORTS UNTIL SYMPTOM FREE
- Abstaining from all recreational drinking and drug use
- Being referred to a program specializing in concussion management (refer to Resources)

**Students with concussion may benefit from the following academic adaptations and supports:**

- Limiting distractions and noise by providing a quiet space for schoolwork and exams
- Allowing for rest breaks during the school day
- Reducing the number and size of assignments
- Allowing extra time for in-class assignments, homework, and tests
- Providing class notes, written directions, and written outlines for larger tasks
- Ensuring all important information is recorded in the student's agenda and reviewed daily
- Reducing stressful situations
- Providing explicit and supportive feedback both orally and in writing
- Allowing the student to work with a peer