

MORE THAN BUMPING YOUR HEAD... A CONCUSSION

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In the past few years, concussion has received a great deal of attention as people in the medical and sports worlds have begun to speak out about the long term problems associated with this injury.

If you think you might have a concussion:

- Seek medical care immediately.
- Avoid any additional trauma to your head – do not engage in any activity that carries a risk of head injury.
- Limit activities of all kinds, including school and work.

So what exactly is a concussion? A concussion is a brain injury that occurs when the brain is shaken inside the skull, causing changes in the brain chemistry and energy supply. A concussion might happen as a result of a direct blow to the head or an indirect force, such as whiplash. You might or might not lose consciousness.

There are many symptoms related to concussion, and they can affect your physical, emotional and mental well-being. Physical symptoms may include:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Difficulty with balance
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Difficulty with sleeping
- Double or blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light and sound

Cognitive (thinking) symptoms may include:

- Difficulty with short-term or long term memory
- Confusion
- Slowed “processing” (for instance, a decreased ability to think through problems)
- Difficulty with concentration

Emotional symptoms may include:

- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Mood Swings

- Aggression
- Decreased tolerance of stress

Concussion is easy to miss because diagnostic imaging, such as MRI or CT scan usually is normal. Because of the variety of possible symptoms that can interfere with daily activity, seek coordinated medical care immediately. Your health care team may include a physician with expertise in concussion, a neurologist, psychologist or a neuropsychologist and a vestibular physical therapist.

The physical therapy team at Lake Country Physical Therapy and SportsCare, PC will evaluate and treat the many problems related to concussion. Because no 2 concussions are the same, the examination is essential to assess your individual symptoms and limitations. Following the examination an individualized treatment program will be designed. If you have dizziness or difficulty with your balance **vestibular physical therapy** may help. The vestibular system, which includes the inner ear and its connections with the brain, is responsible for sensing head movement, keeping your eyes focused when you move your head, and helping you keep your balance. Specific exercise and training to reduce or stop dizziness and improve balance and stability are an important part of your recovery.

We will examine your neck since neck injury often accompanies concussion. **Neck injuries can cause headaches and can contribute toward some forms of dizziness.** Often a full spine assessment is needed. As symptoms due to your concussion improve, we will help you resume physical activity gradually. After a concussion, it is important to limit physical exertion of any kind. The brain will not have time to heal if you increase physical exertion too soon. **It is important to resume physical activity gradually to avoid overloading the brain and the nervous system that have been compromised by concussion. We help you set the pace in restoring full desired function for school, daily activities and work.**

Our goal is to help you achieve the greatest amount of recovery in the shortest amount of time.

For more information about Lake Country Physical Therapy and SportsCare, PC, please call (585) 396-1400, email Zoe@lakecountrypt.com, Robert@lakecountrypt.com or visit us at www.lakecountrypt.com.