CONCUSSION

Have you sustained a blow to the head or whiplash injury?
Did you feel dazed, confused, disoriented, or lose consciousness at the time?

Have you been struggling with fatigue, thinking difficulties, sleep problems, emotional changes, or physical difficulties like headache, balance problems or nausea since your injury?

It is possible that you are experiencing the effects of a concussion!!

WHAT TREATMENTS SHOULD I SEEK?

1) Everyone who even suspects that they may have been concussed should be evaluated by a medical doctor – your general practice doctor will refer you for a brain scan if you are at risk of rare complications.

2) Your doctor can also evaluate you for referral to other professionals. Depending on your needs, specially trained psychologists, physiotherapists, educators, occupational therapists, and speech language pathologists have treatment protocols that may be useful in supporting your recovery. Don't put up with symptoms for weeks and weeks, get help early if you need it.

What should a person do in the first few weeks after a concussion?

• Sleep – It is not uncommon for people to need 15 hours or more of sleep each day to recover from concussion. Sleeping longer than normal is good for your recovery in the early stages.
• Try to follow a routine – get up and do some low demand activities during the day. Try to go to bed at the same time each day. Take a brief 1-2 hour nap around midday if you feel you need it.
• Listen to your body – if you are feeling tired or symptoms are getting worse take a break from what you are doing for a while. If you “push through” your symptoms to “get the job done” you may be prolonging your recovery. REDUCE the demands in your day – physical and mental – to match your available energy.

What should a person avoid in the first few weeks after a concussion?

• Avoid risky activities that could lead to further injury: cycling, climbing, sports, horse riding, skiing etc.
• While prescription medications should be continued unless your doctor advises otherwise, avoid alcohol and non-prescribed drug use.
• Do not use caffeinated drinks or other stimulants to help you “push through” fatigue.
• As much as possible reduce stress in your life, postpone major decisions, have family members help out with responsibilities if possible.
• Do not drive unless your doctor says this is okay, especially if you are feeling tired.
• Avoid high stimulus environments – eg. going to a busy shopping mall, noisy restaurant, or a rock concert, party, or other high stimulus event is not in your best interests after concussion. If you choose to do something demanding, arrange things so that you can excuse yourself easily.

What if you are still experiencing bothering symptoms after the first two weeks?

• Talk to your doctor about a referral to a neuropsychologist or medical specialist who will be able to help you develop a plan for your recovery and explore further treatment options.