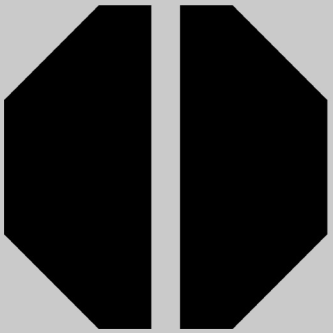
GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

CONCUSSION AWARENESS RESOURCE

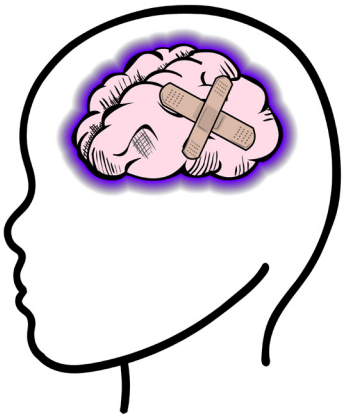


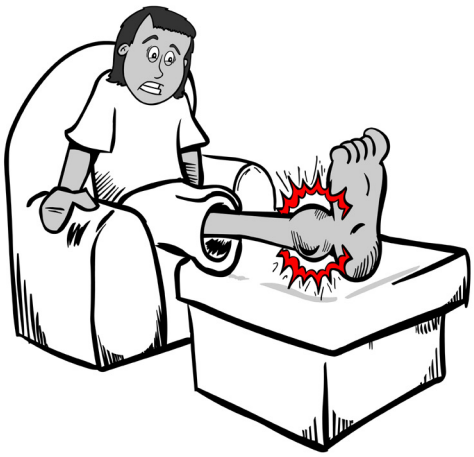
ROWAN'S LAW

E-BOOKLET: AGES 10 AND UNDER

Ontario

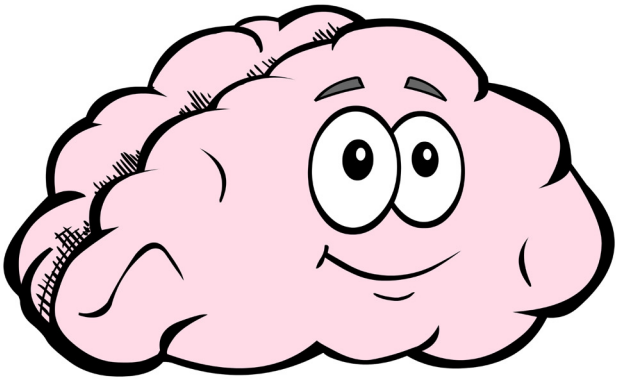
Participating in sports and other activities is fun and healthy. But sometimes when you play you can hurt yourself. Did you know you can even hurt your brain?





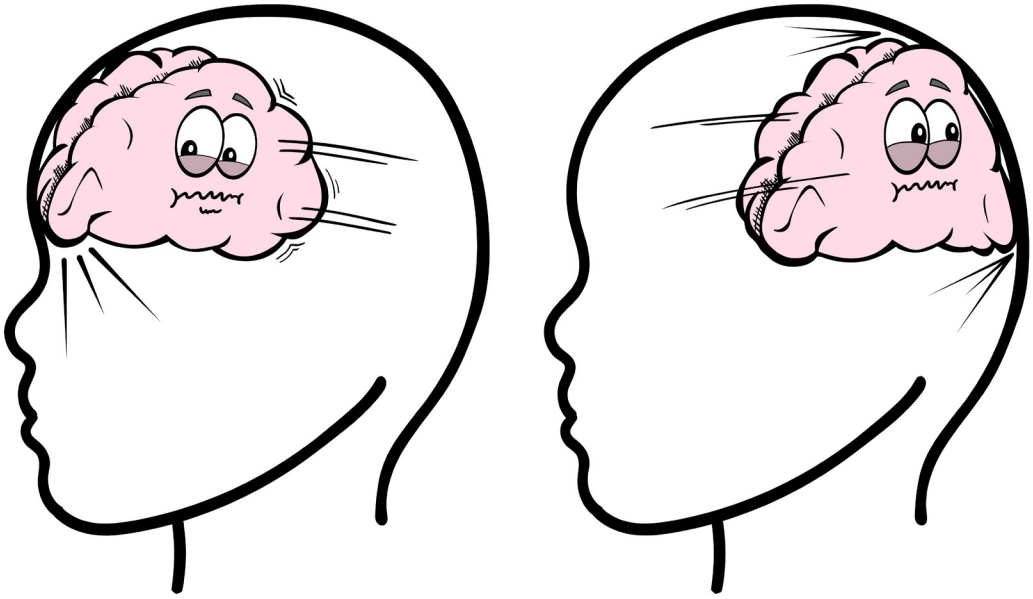
Hurting your brain is different from other injuries. If you sprain your ankle, you can see it get all red and puffy. But when you hurt your brain, it doesn't show on the outside because it's inside your head!

One kind of brain injury is called a concussion. Keep reading to learn about concussions and what to do if you think you might have one. Your brain is very important, so you want to keep it safe!



WHAT IS **A CONCUSSION?**

A concussion happens when your brain moves around inside your head. A hard bump to your head, neck or body can cause a concussion. For example, you can get a concussion if you are hit in the head with a ball or if you fall down hard onto the floor.



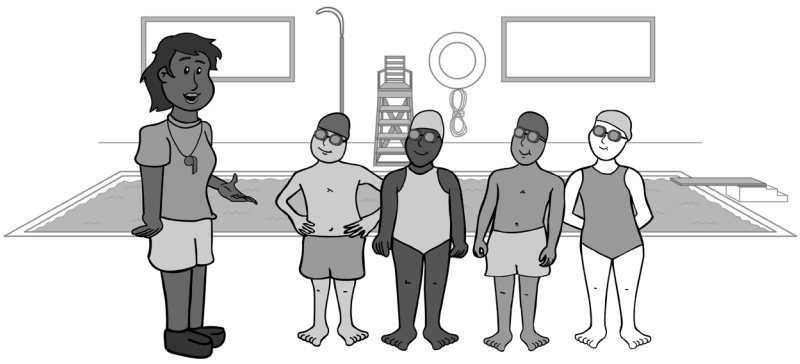
A concussion is a serious injury. Most people get better quickly but some people have long-term problems with their memory or how they feel.

KEEP YOUR BRAIN SAFE: PREVENT CONCUSSIONS!

Learn about concussions to help stay safe.

You should also:

- Make sure your sports equipment is in good condition, that it fits and that you are wearing it properly.
- Follow the rules of your sport or activity. This also means listening to your coach or teacher when they give you instructions, like putting equipment away so no one trips on it.

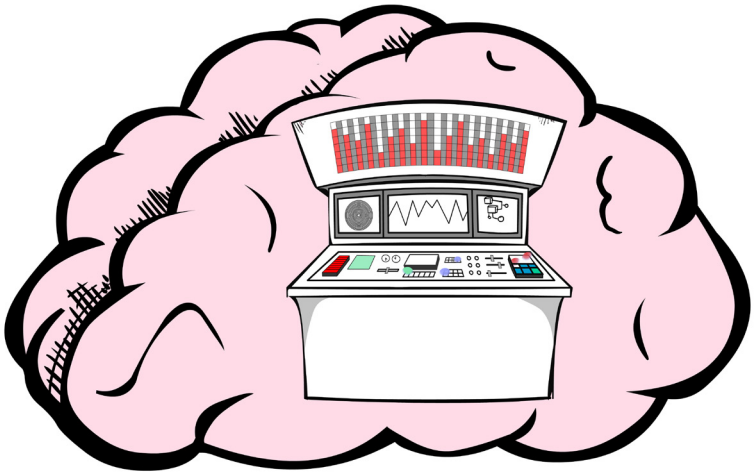


- Read and talk about how to follow the Concussion Code of Conduct for your sport.
- If you get hurt and don't feel right, make sure to tell a parent, coach, teacher or other adult you trust so they can help.

KEEP YOUR BRAIN SAFE:
KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION!

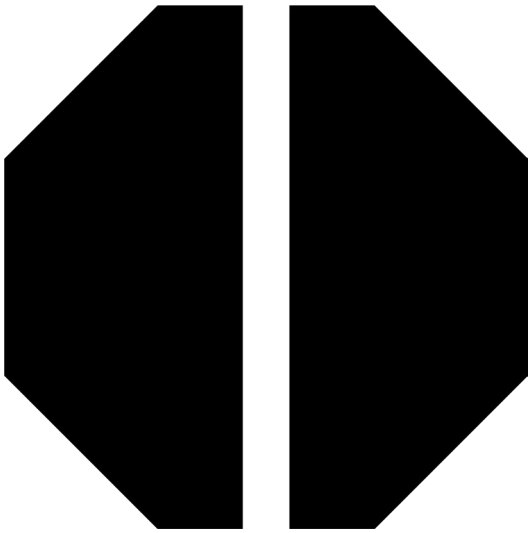
HIT. STOP. SIT.

Your brain controls how you think, feel and move. So, hurting your brain can affect you in lots of ways. The chart below shows some common signs and symptoms of a concussion.



HOW YOU MIGHT FEEL:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Throwing up or feeling like throwing up
- Blurred vision
- Lights or sounds bother you
- Ringing in your ears
- Balance problems
- Tired
- "Don't feel right"



EMOTIONAL:

- Upset or grumpy
- More sad than usual
- Nervous or anxious

THINKING PROBLEMS:

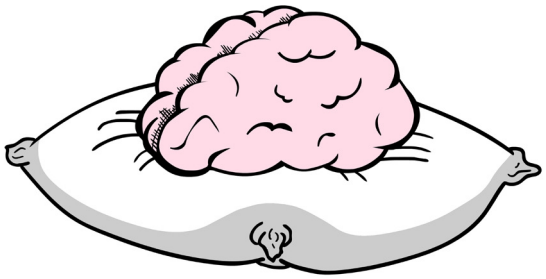
- Feeling confused
- Problems concentrating
- Problems remembering, like what happened before you got hurt

SLEEP PROBLEMS:

- Sleeping more than usual
- Sleeping less than usual
- Having a hard time falling asleep

If you think you, a friend, teammate or classmate has one or more of these symptoms, tell an adult you trust. You should not be left alone if you think you have a concussion.

KEEP YOUR BRAIN SAFE:
WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A CONCUSSION.

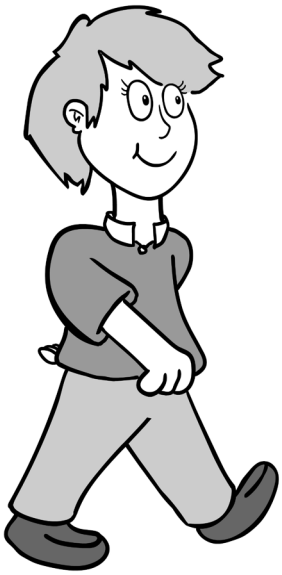


If you have one or more of these symptoms you should:

1. Stop playing.
2. Tell an adult, like a parent, teacher or coach.
3. Get checked by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
4. Rest and recover.

GETTING BETTER

When you have a concussion, rest is the first step for getting better. You will have to stop doing things for a bit if they make you feel worse, such as playing video games, school work, using a phone or tablet, playing sports or taking part in physical education class. You need to get proper sleep.



As your brain heals, you will slowly get back to your usual activities at school, at play and in sport. Getting back to your full routine at school is an important step in getting better. First, you will do simple things such as reading and going for short walks.

Once you can do things like this without feeling worse, you can move to the next step. As long as you feel OK, your parents, coaches and teachers will help you add more activities, such as running, playing with friends, attending school and practicing your sport. The last step will be taking part in games or competitions.

Your medical doctor or nurse practitioner will tell you when it's OK to go back to your activities.

REMINDER

Playing safe will help prevent you from getting injured so that you can keep doing things you love! If you think you might have a concussion, remember:

1. **Stop playing.**
2. **Tell an adult.**
3. **Get checked by a medical doctor or a nurse practitioner.**
4. **Rest and recover.**

Rowan Stringer

ROWAN'S LAW

This e-booklet is part of a series of Rowan's Law concussion awareness resources. Rowan's Law was named for Rowan Stringer, who was a high school rugby player from Ottawa. One day, while playing rugby with her team, Rowan got a concussion. Most people with a concussion get better after they rest and heal. But Rowan didn't know her brain was hurt and needed time to heal. Her parents, teachers and coaches didn't know, either. So, Rowan kept playing rugby. She got hurt two more times. Rowan's brain was so badly hurt that she couldn't get better.

This resource is not meant to replace medical advice about your health care. For more information about concussions please speak with a physician or nurse practitioner.