


TRANSCENDENT Speaker Series

Persisting Symptoms after a Concussion

What are persisting symptoms

Persisting concussion symptoms are symptoms that go beyond the expected time for recovery.

- Concussion symptoms typically improve within 1 month for most individuals, with the greatest number and severity of symptoms in the initial days. If symptoms do not improve significantly or begin to worsen in the days or weeks post-injury, an individual may have persisting symptoms.

 **Did you know** that there are many factors that can impact a person's odds of experiencing persisting symptoms, such as their age, concussion history and medical history.

Impacts of persisting symptoms

Persisting symptoms can impact an individual's health and well-being. Below are some common concussion symptoms to look out for:

Emotional/Behavioural

Sadness Anger
Frustration Irritability
Nervousness

Physical


Headache Nausea
Light Sensitivity
Dizziness

Mental

Fogginess
Feeling Slowed Down
Difficulty Remembering

Sleep

Sleeping More
Troubles Sleeping
Sleeping Less

 **Note:** Not all symptoms that occur after a concussion are due to the concussion itself. Some symptoms could be associated with other factors. It is important to consider the multifactorial nature (psychological, neurobiological, individual and psychosocial factors) of the injury and symptoms.

Key takeaways for management

- ✓ Identify risk factors for persisting symptoms and refer a patient early to a multi-disciplinary care team (for example, a physiotherapist, cognitive behavioural therapist and optometrist).
- ✓ Prioritize the individual's return to usual activities, such as work or school. Remember that transient symptom exacerbation with increased activity is common and safe.
- ✓ Take an individualized and person-centred approach to recovery and be sure to consider all of the factors (for example, psychosocial factors) that may be influencing the individual's recovery and needs.
- ✓ Explore targeted pharmacological and non-pharmacological options to reduce an individual's symptom burden.

This information is based on a talk done by Dr. Sharon Johnston and Cathy Pakenham. [Learn more](#) about this topic by visiting our website at TRANSCENDENTconcussion.ca