



Understanding Concussions: Then and Now

Provided by The Center for Physical Rehabilitation

OLD SCHOOL	NEW SCHOOL
It's just a "Mild, Grade-1" concussion.	Medical professionals with "up-to-date" education on concussions will not use the historic grading scale. The grading scale has been abandoned in favor of a symptom-based, multi-faceted approach to concussion management that emphasizes the use of objective assessment tools aimed at capturing the spectrum of clinical signs and symptoms, cognitive dysfunction and physical deficits, and a symptom-limited, graduated exercise protocol leading to a return to play.
They didn't have loss of consciousness, it's not a concussion.	Approximately 90% of concussions are NOT accompanied with loss of consciousness.
Should we have a CT scan or MRI?	Conventional CT or MRI scans will not diagnose a concussion and are not needed or recommended for the vast majority of sport related concussions. While these types of neuroimaging are crucial in the diagnosis of intracranial hemorrhaging and detecting brain lesions, approximately 78% of concussions will have normal scans.
An athlete needs to be hit on the head to sustain a concussion.	Concussions can occur with any movement or jostling of the head as in whiplash injuries or rotational force, causing injury to the brain.
Injury to the brain only occurs at the initial impact of the concussion.	Traumatic brain injury is an evolving process at the microscopic level of the brain. Chemical and metabolic changes occur for days, weeks to months after impact. That is why it is important to prevent any additional concussions and avoid a second impact syndrome during this time period.
Should I wake them up every couple of hours?	Encourage plenty of rest with uninterrupted sleep. Since fatigue and drowsiness are common symptoms associated with concussions, sufficient sleep will allow the brain to heal and is necessary for recovery.
Male athletes have a higher chance of sustaining a concussion than females.	Studies show a higher probability in female vs. male athletes. This is likely due to their genetic make up and the fact that women are more likely to self report symptoms vs their male counterparts.
He's young, he'll bounce back quick.	Due to their continued brain development at these ages, children and adolescents actually recover more slowly.
Protective equipment will prevent concussion if the newest model is used.	Evidence shows that protective equipment such as helmets, mouth guards and other protective devices may lower risk but no equipment eliminates the risk of concussion.