

Head Trauma

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Brain injury and mental health are often seen and treated as two entirely separate diagnoses or sometimes confused as being the same thing.

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Both can be true; brain injury is sometimes an entirely separate issue from mental health, whereas other times, brain injury can lead to mental health issues developing.

It may also be that you had mental health issues before the injury and that the brain injury exacerbates your pre-existing mental health symptoms.

Mental health and brain injury can overlap because all cognitive, psychological, emotional and behavioural skills come from the brain.

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CONCUSSION

- also known as mild head injury or minor head injury - is an injury where the brain shakes back and forth inside the skull, causing mild damage.

While most mild head injuries result in no long-term damage to the brain, they can cause temporary disruption to brain function that can last for at least several weeks.

10% of reported mild head injuries/concussions involve a loss of consciousness – it's important not solely to rely on this as an indicator.

Mild head injury can leave people with a range of concussion symptoms, including dizziness, nausea, confusion or an inability to process or retain information, sensitivity to light, and vision distortion.

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Dos and don'ts in the first few days after concussion:

DO	DON'T
Make sure you stay within reach of a telephone and medical help in the next few days.	Stay at home alone for 48 hours after leaving hospital.
Have plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations.	Drink alcohol until you feel better.
Show this information to a friend or family member who can keep an eye on your condition.	Take aspirin or sleeping tablets without consulting a doctor.
Take painkillers such as paracetamol for headaches.	Return to work until you feel ready.
get further information on when to seek medical attention on the NHS website.	Play any contact sport for at least three weeks without consulting your doctor.

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CONCUSSION MYTHS

MYTH

"I didn't lose consciousness, so surely it couldn't have been concussion?"

FACT

Less than 10% of concussions result in loss of consciousness. Following a significant impact to the head, some important signs to look out for that may indicate a concussion are confusion, dizziness and forgetfulness.

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MYTH

"I don't want to let my friends down by being removed from action if I have a concussion."

FACT

If there is any suspicion of concussion, it is important to take an if in doubt, sit it out approach. Pushing on through can make the impact of a concussion worse.

MYTH

"My friend had a concussion, and they were fine after a week. I'll probably be fine if I get a concussion too."

FACT

No two brain injuries are ever the same and experiences will vary from person to person depending on things such as the force of the impact, location of injury and personal differences. Whereas one person may recover from a concussion after a week, others may have ongoing difficulties.

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MYTH

"I hit my head when I got concussion. Surely that doesn't mean I have brain injury?"

FACT

These terms – minor brain injury, mild traumatic brain injury, and concussion – are often used interchangeably. They all mean a brain injury, but not a severe one.

MYTH

"You have to hit your head to have a concussion."

FACT

Most concussions will result from a blow to the head. However, they can also occur due to the rapid acceleration/deceleration of the body as the brain moves rapidly inside the skull.

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MYTH

"If you don't have any symptoms immediately, you don't have a concussion."

FACT

Symptoms of concussion can often be delayed in their presentation and may not manifest for several hours or even days after the incident.

MYTH

"You can return to play as soon as you feel better."

FACT

If you have sustained a concussion or suspected concussion, you mustn't return to play or training until cleared to do so by a medical professional – even if you feel fine.

