



Standards for Post-Concussion Care

The Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation (ONF) believes in providing the best information to healthcare providers, patients and families. ONF is working to raise awareness about the care you should receive after a concussion (a type of brain injury).

In 2017, ONF shared a report called “Standards for Post-Concussion Care.”

The Standards are about you getting the right care, from the right provider, at the right time.

Standards were needed for 3 reasons:

- Patients and their families don't always know what to do after concussion and what type of care to expect
- The types of concussion care and services available are not the same across Ontario
- There are many new businesses and healthcare providers offering concussion care and services

ONF is working to have the standards be more widely accepted and followed across the province.

To create these standards, ONF:

- used evidence from research studies
- worked with concussion and brain injury experts, health agencies and professional associations
- asked people and family members with lived understanding about their concussion experiences

This handout is a summary of the standards for patients and families to use. Standards tell you what you need to know about quality care. A more informed patient or family member can make sure they are getting the right care, from the right provider, at the right time.

After you have been diagnosed with a concussion, you should see your family doctor or nurse practitioner within 1 – 2 weeks.

This is an important time for them to see if you are getting better. They can check your symptoms and decide if you need to be seen again.

You should continue to see your family doctor or nurse practitioner to monitor your symptoms and progress.

Forcing recovery to happen too early or waiting too long for care may not be helpful. Scheduled visits with your doctor or nurse practitioner should lead to improved care for you.

Did you know ...

There are only two kinds of experts who can medically diagnose a concussion – a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

Other healthcare providers can suspect a concussion but they can't diagnose one.



Receiving the right information and care is important. Your healthcare providers should be able to provide you with information and answer questions about your concussion.

You may have questions such as: What can I expect as I recover? What should I do? Where can I go to get more services or information? Questions like these are why we created these materials. We want to share what is important for you to know, so that you can be more informed, and know what types of questions to ask.

Your concussion clinic (or concussion network) should:

- **Have direct access to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.**

This means that a doctor or nurse practitioner should be working in the clinic or be well connected to the clinic so that when you need it, your care can be provided in a fast and coordinated way.

- **Tell you about the type of care they offer and when it will be provided.**

Be sure to ask questions about the types of services they offer and how they can help you, and if they can't help, what they might suggest.

- **Have at least three different qualified healthcare providers.**

No one kind of healthcare provider can treat all your symptoms. We don't tell clinics who to hire, but you will need different types of providers to help you with the main symptoms after a concussion. At least three providers at the clinic should be able to:



If there is no concussion clinic in your area, a network or group of healthcare providers can work together to provide your care. There are certain things they should do as a group to make sure you get the right care at the right time.

- **Make it clear what kind of healthcare provider can treat the symptoms or problems you are having.**

Each type of healthcare provider is trained and qualified to do different things and should only provide care based on their training and the rules of their profession. It is important that your healthcare provider has the right training and experience working with people with concussion.

- **Provide therapies that are proven to work or recommended by provincial, national or international guidelines.**

Your healthcare provider may offer you a therapy that is not based on or supported by good quality research evidence. Sometimes when there is limited evidence, therapies might be offered based on the experiences of well-known brain injury experts who use them. You need to be able to decide if it's worth it for you to try something of unknown quality, particularly if you are being asked to pay for it.