

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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Take care of your brain

March 15 marks the start of Brain Awareness Week.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that is caused by a blow to the head or body, a fall, or another injury that jars or shakes the brain inside the skull. Although there may be cuts or bruises on the head or face, there may be no other visible signs of a brain injury.

Post-concussion syndrome occurs after a concussion. Common symptoms are changes in the ability to concentrate, think, remember, or solve problems. Symptoms, which may include headaches, personality changes, and dizziness, may be related to stress from the events that caused the injury.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.

Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or Health Link at 811 you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

- Rest is the best treatment for post-concussion syndrome.
- Do not drive if you have taken a prescription pain medicine.
- Rest in a quiet, dark room until your headache is gone. Close your eyes and try to relax or go to sleep. Do not watch TV or read.
- Put a cold, moist cloth or cold pack on the painful area for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the cold pack and your skin.

- Have someone gently massage your neck and shoulders.
- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor or nurse call line if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. You will get more details on the specific medicines your doctor prescribes.

Try to reduce stress

Some ways to do this include:

- Taking slow, deep breaths.
- Soaking in a warm bath.
- Listening to soothing music.
- Having a massage or back rub.
- Drinking a warm, non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverage.
- Get enough sleep.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet. A balanced diet includes whole grains, dairy, fruits and vegetables, and protein. Eat a variety of foods from each of those groups so you get all the nutrients you need.
- Avoid alcohol and illegal drugs.
- Try relaxation exercises, such as breathing and muscle relaxation exercises.
- Talk to your doctor about counselling. It may help you deal with stress from your injury.