



# Barrhaven Chiropractic Health Centre

## NEWSLETTER

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### Concussions in kids and the ability of parents to recognize the signs

Watch any sports highlight reel or open the sports page of your local newspaper and you'll find another athlete who has suffered a concussion. Concussion is a common head injury that can occur in most contact sports and/or activity with a higher occurrence of taking a spill such as; downhill skiing and/or skating.

Concussions in children and young athletes have become a growing concern not only for parents; but for coaches, trainers and healthcare providers alike. According to the 3rd International Symposium on Concussion in Sport held in November 2008, a concussion is defined as a "complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic biomechanical forces". Simply put, a concussion is a head injury caused by a force that is transmitted to the head. Imagine a small sponge sitting in a bucket of water (brain within the skull). Under normal circumstances the sponge is able to move freely within the bucket of water. However, a force to the bucket can cause the sponge to make contact with the borders of the bucket, causing damage to the sponge/brain.

Perhaps the two biggest misconceptions when it comes to recognizing a concussion is firstly, the issue surrounding loss of consciousness and secondly, the idea that you must be hit in the head for a concussion to occur. Loss of consciousness is only one of the many possible signs and symptoms of a concussion. If your child does not lose consciousness, he or she may still have suffered a concussion; although the force did not directly impact the head. Recall our sponge and bucket analogy, a hit to the body can cause enough force to be transmitted to the head, causing a concussion. Understanding what a concussion is and recognizing the signs and symptoms early is imperative in the management of your concussed child. Studies show that recognizing even minor concussions and taking the proper steps before allowing your child to return very important; as the likelihood that your child experiences a subsequent concussion is increased and the symptoms experienced in the second concussion may be more severe and take an extended period of time to recover.

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### Breaking News!

The Barrhaven Chiropractic Health Centre would like to welcome its newest member of our health care team;

#### **Dr. Andrea Proulx (Naturopathic Doctor)**

Dr. Proulx will begin taking patients in February. Stay tuned for a special newsletter on Naturopathic Medicine.

### Massage Therapy...It feels good, but what does the research say?

The use of massage therapy in the treatment of low back pain (LBP) is very popular. Although LBP is a benign and self-limiting condition, many patients look for some type of therapy to relieve their symptoms. Massage therapy is thought to improve a patient's condition by offering the symptomatic relief of pain through physical and mental relaxation, and increasing a patient's tolerance to pain through the release of endorphins (one of the body's own painkillers).

A study published in the highly recognized, Spine Journal (2009), looked at the most recent studies published on massage therapy and LBP, to provide healthcare providers and the general public an up-to-date review on the effectiveness of massage therapy in the treatment of low back pain.

The study concluded;

1. Massage therapy is beneficial in the treatment of subacute and chronic LBP.

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### What do I do if my child suffers a concussion?

If your child suffers a concussion or you suspect that he or she may have suffered a concussion, they should stop playing immediately, kept under constant surveillance and taken for an evaluation as soon as possible. If the child has lost consciousness, do not move the child, as they should be taken to the hospital by ambulance.

### How long will it take for my child to recover?

The majority of concussion will resolve in 7-10days. However, it may take weeks or months to resolve, especially if this is not their first occurrence.

### How is a concussion treated?

Rest! Activity, exercise and even school can aggravate symptoms. Your child can slowly return to school as symptoms subside. Completing a half day of school may be required before attending school full time.

### When can my child return to sport?

Return to sport or activity must follow a stepwise approach:  
No activity. Rest. Once cleared by doctor he or she may progress to step 2.  
Light exercise such as walking or stationary cycling for 10-15min.  
Sport specific activity (ie running in soccer) for 20-30min.  
"On field" practice with contact  
Game play

Each step must last for a least one day. If any symptoms return, that step must be stopped, take 24hr to rest and then see your doctor before starting the stepwise protocol again.

### What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

Symptoms of concussion are not merely physical. Parents must be attentive to the emotional and cognitive changes as well.

#### Physical Symptoms

Headache  
Dizziness  
Nausea  
Tinnitus (ear ringing)  
Feeling dazed or unsteady

#### Physical Signs

Loss of consciousness  
Poor coordination  
Easily distracted  
Vomiting  
Slow responses  
Personality changes

#### Cognitive Symptoms

Confusion  
Amnesia  
Disorientation  
Poor concentration

#### Emotional Symptoms

Depression  
Irritability  
Moodiness

Although concussions are not fully preventable, we can try to limit the severity and occurrences of concussion by wearing proper equipment (i.e. helmets), diagnosing the injury properly and by making sure the athlete does not return to sport too soon.

For further information on the prevention of brain and spinal cord injuries in children please visit [www.thinkfirst.ca](http://www.thinkfirst.ca).

#### Disclaimer

The following information is for educational purposes only. It is not medical advice and is not intended to replace the advice or attention of a health-care professional. Please consult your physician or health-care provider before making use of any of the information within our website, articles or newsletter.

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Massage therapy combined with education and exercises was more beneficial than massage therapy as a stand alone treatment. Massage Therapy was more effective than placebo, sham treatment and no treatment at all. Massage therapy was more effective when delivered by a licensed therapist. Massage therapy (specifically acupuncture massage) was more effective than physiotherapy in long and short pain relief.

What is important to note is that this study looked at massage therapy in the treatment of subacute and chronic conditions. Massage therapy in the acute phase, when tissues are inflamed has not shown to be effective and were not reviewed in this study. The question is, if studies have shown the effectiveness of massage therapy in the treatment of LBP, when is a good time to incorporate massage therapy? As the study suggests, massage therapy should be incorporated during the subacute stage or when the initial inflammatory symptoms have subsided. During the acute phase of treatment, often muscle tightness acts as a protective mechanism for the body, preventing certain movements that would aggravate your condition. Also, massage stimulates blood flow, and during the inflammatory stage of your condition, increasing blood flow can increase inflammation, which will aggravate the problem. Conversely, in chronic conditions, loosening tight muscles and increasing blood flow are both very important in your treatment. Bottom line, massage therapy is a great treatment modality and adjunct to chiropractic, exercise and education. It might even be your missing link.

