Toronto abi Network

Finding the Right Concussion Clinic

Use this document to help you choose the right clinic and avoid those that don't offer quality services.

If your concussion symptoms last longer than three months, you might need additional care.[1] Your medical doctor or nurse practitioner can suggest other health care professionals to treat your prolonged symptoms. Prolonged symptoms are a variety of physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural symptoms that may endure for weeks or months following a concussion.[1]

You may find clinics that offer concussion treatment near you; however, not all concussion clinics provide the same quality of care. If there is no concussion clinic near you, look for a team of professionals who will work together to manage your care. The team should include a medical doctor and other health care professionals (e.g., occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social worker, nurse practitioner).

TORONTO CONCUSSION NAVIGATOR

The Toronto Concussion Navigator tool is meant to help individuals 18 years of age or older to find a clinic **in Toronto** that provides **specialized concussion care**. It is meant to be used by individuals with concussion, their caregivers, and health practitioners.

To determine the best clinic for you, you will be asked a number of questions about you and your injury. To use this tool, you **must** know your: date of injury, how your injury occurred (e.g., fall, car accident, etc.), age, and postal code. Click HERE to access the tool.

[1]Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation. (2018). Guideline for concussion/mild traumatic brain injury & prolonged symptoms.

BEWARE OF

Clinics that offer a "quick fix." Remember, recovery takes time and no single treatment is proven to cure symptoms or improve recovery from all concussions.

Any expensive or lengthy treatments that are not supported by research evidence. Ask questions so you can decide if it's worth it for you to try something of unknown quality, particularly if you are being asked to pay for it. The provider should be able to tell you how they will track your progress to know whether the treatment is right for you or when the treatment will be finished.

A provider that offers to treat multiple aspects of a concussion or provide complete care (e.g., neck, vision, cognitive functioning). High-quality concussion care requires a team approach that includes a medical doctor and other health care professionals working together.

If possible, visit the clinic before making a decision.
Ask a close friend or family member to go with you (or for you) if you are unable to go in person.

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Use the concussion clinic checklist to help you choose the right clinic and avoid those that don't offer quality services. At a minimum, clinics should answer **Yes** to the first 3 questions on the checklist.

Tip: Have a friend or family member help you complete this checklist if possible. Answers to some of the questions can likely be found on the clinic's website. If not available online, phone the clinic to get the information.

CONCUSSION CLINIC CHECKLIST

	YES	NO
1. **Are there at least three different types of regulated health care professionals in your team who can treat medical, physical, cognitive, and emotional issues after a concussion?** Examples include occupational therapist, medical doctor, physiotherapist, etc.	☐	☐
2. **Do you have a medical doctor or nurse practitioner who has experience with concussions at or connected to your clinic?**	☐	☐
3. **Is there a medical doctor, nurse practitioner or neuropsychologist who can tell me if my symptoms are because of a concussion?** Note: only a medical doctor, nurse practitioner or neuropsychologist can diagnose a concussion.	☐	☐
4. **After a diagnosis, do you set up a follow-up appointment within one to two weeks?** Note: every patient with a diagnosis of concussion should be seen again within one to two weeks.	☐	☐
5. **Do you offer treatment for both short-term and long-term symptoms?**	☐	☐
6. **Do you follow best and current evidence?** Note: examples include Clinical Practice Guideline for Concussion/mTBI & Prolonged Symptoms, Guideline for Diagnosing and Managing Pediatric Concussion, and the International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport.	☐	☐
7. **Will someone at the clinic speak to my employer, teacher, and/or coach to help me get back to my daily activities?**	☐	☐
8. **Will someone at the clinic help coordinate my care?** This includes communicating with my doctor and others, such as family, involved in my care.	☐	☐
9. **Do you make referrals to other professionals for services you do not offer?**	☐	☐

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OTHER HELPFUL QUESTIONS

There are other reasons to consider when choosing the right clinic, such as location, cost of service, payment options, clinic accessibility, etc. Consider asking the clinic the following questions:

- Will the team meet regularly with me to discuss my care plan?
- Do you offer residential services?
- Are the services at this clinic covered by OHIP?
- If not covered by OHIP, are they covered by my insurance?
- Will the clinic submit a treatment plan directly to the insurance company?
- If not covered by insurance, what are the costs?
- What methods of payment do you accept?
- Do you offer a payment plan for those who are low income?
- What is the wait time from date of referral to first visit?
- Where is the clinic located?
- What are the clinic hours?
- What is the cancellation/missed appointment policy?
- Is the clinic entrance accessible?

Questions? If you need help with this document or need assistance with finding services for brain injury in Toronto & GTA, contact us at **abi.network@uhn.ca** or call us at 416-597-3057.

If you live outside of the Greater Toronto Area, search for the ABI Provincial Navigator in your area in the Provincial Navigator Contact List

ADDITIONAL CONCUSSION RESOURCES

Living Concussion Guidelines: concussionsontario.org
Ontario Brain Injury Association: obia.ca/concussion
Parachute: parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/concussion

This resource was created in collaboration with people with lived experience.
We are grateful for their time and enthusiasm to improve the experience for others.