



# Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy

What you need to know

[krg.nsw.gov.au/dementia](http://krg.nsw.gov.au/dementia)



# What is Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE)?

Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) is a brain disorder that is not yet well understood. It is likely caused by repeated head knocks, causing the death of nerve cells in the brain, and progressive degeneration.

Symptoms may include some of the following:

**Cognitive symptoms:** Memory loss, attention and concentration difficulties, language impairment, visual/spatial difficulties.

**Behavioural symptoms:** Explosivity, physical or verbal violence, impulse control problems, paranoia, being socially inappropriate.

**Mood-related symptoms:** Sadness/depression, hopelessness, substance abuse, anxiety/agitation, apathy, manic behaviour.

**Motor symptoms:** Tremors, impaired balance or coordination, abnormal gait, slurred speech.



## What causes CTE?

CTE is caused by repetitive head impacts which result in minor to moderate traumas to the brain.

This includes symptomatic concussions as well as non-concussive hits that do not cause symptoms.

Non-concussive hits are routine in many sports, including rugby, AFL, soccer, boxing and netball, as well as for military personnel, domestic violence victims, first responders and others.

CTE is not limited to professional sportspeople, it has been found in athletes who have not played since high school or university.

CTE doesn't appear to be related to a single head injury, but to repeated head impacts, particularly when second and subsequent injuries occur before the first has resolved.

# What to do if you suspect CTE?

Your general practitioner (GP) is your first port of call if you or a loved one are concerned about CTE.

It is important that you discuss your concussive and non-concussive head impact history with your GP.

Currently there is no single test that can diagnose CTE, a medical specialist can only diagnose probable CTE after careful assessment.

Ask your GP if you are a candidate for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or a referral to a neurologist who specialises in cognitive or behavioural neurology.

Your GP can recommend available options to treat cognitive and behavioural symptoms.



# Support Services for CTE

## Connecters Australia

Supporting people living with CTE and their loved ones.

[www.connecters.org.au](http://www.connecters.org.au)

## Dementia Australia

Provides support for people with all types of dementia.

[www.dementia.org.au](http://www.dementia.org.au)

## Concussion Legacy Foundation

Founded to support athletes, veterans and all affected by concussions and CTE.

[www.concussionfoundation.org](http://www.concussionfoundation.org)





For more information visit

[www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

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