

How Concussions Get Missed After Car Accidents

Maine car accident lawyers explain what injury victims need to know

After a [car accident](#) on I-95, Route 1, or a downtown street in a Maine city such as Portland, most people look for obvious injuries. Broken bones, bleeding cuts, and bruises are easy to see. But some car accident injuries aren't obvious, including concussions. A concussion can quietly change how you think, feel, and function long after a car crash.

Many people walk away from a collision thinking they simply have a headache or feel "off" from the stress of the wreck. Days later, brain fog, dizziness or mood changes might start emerging. You may suspect you have a brain injury from your car accident. But insurance companies may argue that your concussion is unrelated or "not that serious." That gap between the crash and your diagnosis is exactly how concussions sometimes get missed after car accidents.

Our Maine car accident attorneys at [Romanow Law Group](#) have seen this pattern again and again. That's why it's important to understand you're not alone if you didn't realize right away that you had a brain injury. Fortunately, you have options for getting the medical care you need and car accident compensation you deserve.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) that happens when your brain is shaken inside your skull. In a car crash, concussions can occur even if your head never hits the steering wheel, window or headrest. A sudden stop or change in direction can cause the brain to move, twist or bump against the skull, disrupting normal brain function.

Common concussion symptoms include:

- Frequent, severe headaches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Extreme fatigue or tiredness
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Dizziness or poor balance
- Confusion or memory problems
- Trouble concentrating
- Blurred vision

- Irritability or unexplained mood changes
- Anxiety or depression

These symptoms can last days, weeks or longer depending on the person and the severity of the brain injury. What makes concussions challenging is that there is no visible sign that you are hurt.

Imaging like CT scans or MRIs can appear normal even when the brain is not functioning the way it did before the crash. That is why careful monitoring and honest communication with your doctors are so important after a car accident concussion.

Why do delayed concussion symptoms show up after a car crash?

Many people expect concussion symptoms to appear immediately after an accident. In reality, it's extremely common for delayed concussion symptoms to emerge hours or even days after a crash. Several factors contribute to this delay.

Right after a collision, your body is flooded with adrenaline. That natural response can temporarily mask pain and confusion. You may be focused on exchanging insurance information, talking to police and arranging a ride home. Only later, when things quiet down, you might start to notice that your head hurts, you cannot concentrate or you feel unusually tired.

The brain also reacts to injury over time. Swelling, chemical changes and disrupted nerve signals may build gradually in the days following the crash. That's why someone may feel "fine" the night of the wreck, then wake up the next day feeling foggy, nauseated or unusually sensitive to light and noise.

What warning signs should you watch for after a Maine car accident?

Because concussion symptoms are often delayed, it's important to pay attention to how you feel in the days and weeks after a wreck, even if emergency room staff initially cleared you. Some of the most common red flags include:

- **Persistent or worsening headaches:** Ongoing headaches, pressure in the head or pain that gets worse with activity can signal that your brain has not recovered from the impact.
- **Dizziness and balance problems:** Feeling unsteady on your feet, lightheaded or as if the room is spinning can point to an injury affecting the brain's balance centers.
- **Confusion and brain fog:** Difficulty following conversations, losing your train of thought or feeling "out of it" are classic signs that something is wrong.

- **Memory gaps or trouble concentrating:** Forgetting simple things, repeating questions or being unable to focus on work or school tasks can show that the injury is affecting short-term memory and attention.
- **Sensitivity to light or noise:** Bright lights, computer screens or everyday sounds may suddenly feel overwhelming or painful.
- **Sleep changes and fatigue:** Sleeping far more or far less than usual, or feeling exhausted despite rest, are common post-concussion problems.
- **Mood and personality changes:** Irritability, anxiety, sadness or emotional ups and downs that were not there before the crash can be part of a concussion, not a personal failing.

If you notice these changes, treat them as possible concussion symptoms, not just “stress” from the accident. Trust your body. When something feels off, get examined by a doctor rather than ignoring the warning signs. Your health and your car accident claim could be on the line.

Why is immediate medical care so important for a possible concussion?

Even if symptoms seem subtle at first, seeing a doctor quickly after a car accident is one of the most important steps you can take. Medical providers can evaluate your neurological function, diagnose exactly what’s wrong, rule out internal bleeding or swelling in the brain and give you clear instructions about rest and activity. Early diagnosis and medical care reduce the risk of complications and can shorten your recovery time.

Prompt care also creates a critical medical record. When you tell a doctor that your head was jolted in a crash and you now have specific symptoms, that visit becomes a clear link between your collision and your medical diagnosis. If you wait weeks to seek help, insurance companies often argue that something else must have caused your concussion.

Early evaluation can give you a safety net in many cases as well. Some symptoms, such as worsening headaches, vomiting, slurred speech or seizures, can signal a more serious brain injury that requires emergency treatment, including perhaps brain surgery. Having a medical team following your progress makes it more likely that those dangerous changes are diagnosed and caught in time.

How can a missed concussion affect your life after a Maine car accident?

If a concussion goes undiagnosed, many people try to push through their symptoms since they mistakenly think nothing’s wrong. You might go back to work too soon, attempt to drive while still foggy, or continue caring for family members while your brain

is struggling to heal. That added strain can make symptoms last longer and sometimes lead to more serious, long-term problems.

Undiagnosed concussions can also quietly undermine relationships and daily routines. Loved ones may notice that you're forgetful, irritable or withdrawn and assume you're simply not coping well. Employers may see you as less reliable or productive, without understanding that a serious brain injury is driving those changes.

From a legal perspective, a missed concussion can make it harder to connect your struggles to the crash. When there's no early medical documentation, insurers are quick to claim that you're exaggerating or that your symptoms are unrelated. That's why it's important to pay attention to your symptoms and to seek medical care right away if something doesn't feel right.

How do legal deadlines affect concussion claims in Maine?

Maine gives injured people more time than many states to file a lawsuit after a car accident. In most cases, you have up to six years from the date of the crash to file a personal injury lawsuit in a civil court under Maine's general statute of limitations. On paper, six years might seem like a long time, especially when concussion symptoms take weeks or months to fully unfold.

In practice, waiting can still be risky. Evidence often disappears within days or weeks. Witnesses move away or forget details. Surveillance video from gas stations, convenience stores or nearby businesses is routinely recorded over. If your case involves a government vehicle or other special circumstances, shorter notice deadlines may apply as well.

Another layer is medical documentation. It takes time for doctors to understand whether your symptoms will resolve or become long-term issues. Your legal team needs that information to properly calculate future medical costs, lost income and the impact on your life. When you involve a lawyer early, we can monitor these developments and make sure you do not run up against a deadline with a case that is not fully developed.

How can you protect your concussion claim when symptoms are delayed?

If you didn't realize you had a concussion until several days or weeks after your crash, you still have many legal options in many cases. The key is to take practical steps that support both your recovery and your legal rights. For example:

- **Schedule a follow-up medical visit quickly:** Tell your doctor about your crash, when symptoms started and how they have changed. Ask specifically whether you may have a concussion or another type of brain injury.

- **Follow medical instructions carefully:** Rest, reduced screen time, time off work and gradual return to activity are common concussion recommendations. Sticking to the plan shows you are taking your recovery seriously. Following your doctor's instructions also strengthens your legal claim.
- **Keep a symptom journal:** Write down when you experience headaches, dizziness, cognitive issues or emotional changes each day. This record helps your doctors track progress and gives your lawyer a window into how the injury affects your life.
- **Avoid downplaying your symptoms with insurance companies:** Simple statements like "I'm fine" or "it's just a headache" can be used against you. Stick to the facts and let your medical records speak for your medical condition.

These steps do not erase the delay in diagnosis, but they shift the focus back where it belongs: on the crash and its impact on your brain, rather than on gaps in early treatment.

Why do insurance companies often question concussion claims?

Concussions are real injuries, yet they are also some of the most disputed in car accident cases. There are a few reasons why. First, concussions do not show up neatly on an X-ray like a broken bone. That makes them easier for insurers to challenge. Second, symptoms such as headaches, fatigue and mood changes are common in everyday life, so insurance adjusters might suggest they're unrelated to the crash.

Delayed symptoms give insurers additional arguments. If you didn't seek immediate care, they may claim that your concussion must not be serious or that something else happened in the meantime. They may point to pre-existing issues like migraines, anxiety or sleep problems and argue that you are simply returning to your old baseline.

That's why thorough medical documentation and a clear timeline matter so much. When your medical records show a change starting after the collision and consistent follow-up care, it becomes much harder for an insurance company to dismiss your injury as "just stress" or "nothing to do with the crash."

How can a Maine car accident lawyer help with a missed concussion?

When you are trying to heal from a brain injury, battling an insurance company should not be your main job. A Maine car accident lawyer can take on the heavy lifting of your legal case so you can focus on your mental and physical recovery. Our role often includes:

- **Investigating the crash thoroughly:** We gather police reports, crash scene photographs, witness statements and any available video to show how the collision happened and why the other driver is responsible.
- **Consulting with your medical providers:** We work with your doctors to make sure that they document your diagnosis, treatment plan, and long-term prognosis. And most importantly, that your concussion is clearly connected to your crash.
- **Calculating the full financial impact:** We look beyond immediate bills to include future medical care, lost earning capacity and the ways your brain injury has changed your life.
- **Handling all insurance communication:** We deal directly with adjusters, protect you from leading questions and push back against efforts to minimize your injury.
- **Preparing your case for court if needed:** When insurance companies negotiate in bad faith and make a lowball settlement offer, we're ready to file a car accident concussion lawsuit and present your case to a Maine jury in court.

With our legal team in your corner, you're not just another claim number. You're a person whose life was disrupted by a preventable crash, and your case is built to reflect that reality. At [Romanow Law Group](#), we understand the stress and strain caused by complicated legal cases.

If you're struggling with delayed concussion symptoms after a Maine car accident, [contact us](#) today for a free consultation. Your recovery deserves careful attention and so does your claim.