ThinkFirst
National Injury Prevention Foundation

Concussion *Fast Facts*

Test Your Knowledge

Q: Do you have to lose consciousness in order to suffer from a concussion?

A: No, patients can be diagnosed with a concussion without losing consciousness from their injury. Some patients may not even be aware they have a concussion because of this.[1]

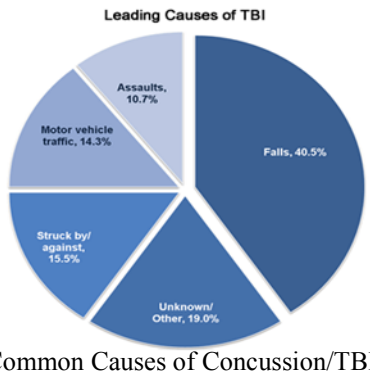
Q: How long do concussion symptoms usually last?

A: Symptoms normally disappear within ten days but can last months to more than a year, depending on the severity of the concussion.[1]

A concussion is defined as a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in which the brain suddenly moves back and forth causing a disruption in function.[2] Concussions are typically caused by trauma to the head, but can also be cause by violent shaking of the head or even upper body.[1] Concussions can affect numerous aspects of a person's normal functioning including memory, reflexes, judgment, balance, muscle coordination, and speech.[3] If a concussion is suspected, a physician should be immediately consulted.

KNOW THE FACTS

- There are an estimated total of 1.6-3.8 million concussions annually.[4]
- The actual number could exceed 3.8 million per year because some patients do not seek medical attention if they are unaware they have a concussion.
- The annual incidence of sports-related concussions is 300,000 in the United States.[5]
- Other causes of concussions/TBIs that are non-sports related include, in descending order: falls, being struck by/against an object, traffic/motor-vehicle crashes, and assault.[6]



Common Causes of Concussion/TBI[6]

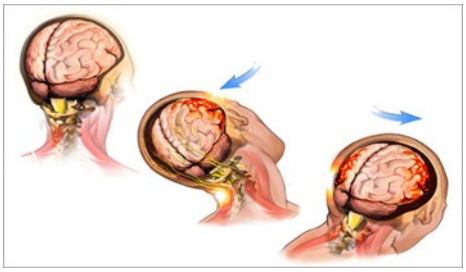


Diagram depicting mechanism of a concussion.[7]

WHO IS MOST AFFECTED BY CONCUSSIONS?

- Athletes who participate in contact sports are at an elevated risk for suffering a concussion.
- Athletes in contact sports may have as high as a 19% likelihood of sustaining a concussion each season of play.[5]
- There are more than 62,000 concussions sustained by high school athletes each year.[3]
- The elderly (higher fall risk)
- Drivers

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS[1]

- Headache/feeling of pressure in the head
- Dizziness
- Ringing in the ears
- Disrupted vision
- Nausea/vomiting
- Amnesia
- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Slurred speech
- Fatigue
- Confusion

ThinkFirst about...

Concussion *Fast Facts!*

… protecting yourself and others from concussions! There are many negative health outcomes associated with a concussion, especially multiple concussions over an extended period of time. Simple precautions can be taken to minimize the risk of sustaining a concussion or traumatic brain injury.

Test Your Knowledge

Q: What is the best way to recover from a concussion?

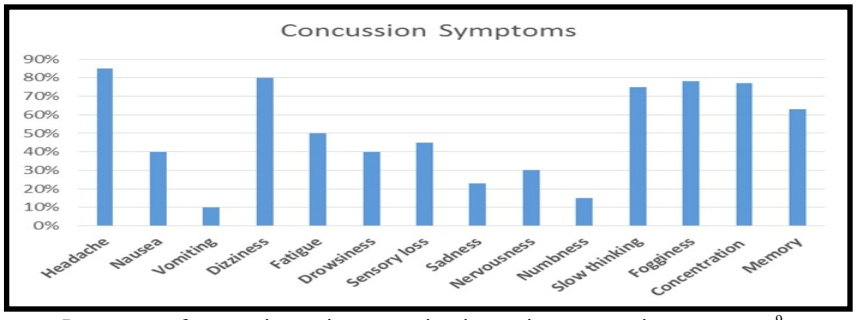
A: Physical and mental rest is the best ways to recover from a concussion. The best way to do this is to avoid strenuous physical exertion and to limit activities that require prolonged periods of mental concentration until symptoms cease.[1] Athletes should not return to normal participation until all symptoms disappear and they are cleared by a physician.

PREVENTION TIPS[3]

- Wear certified helmets and other protective equipment when participating in athletics.
- Follow sports rules to avoid head contact and trauma
- Always buckle your seatbelt in a vehicle and drive responsibly to avoid collisions.
- Avoid violence
- Never return to athletics after a concussion until all symptoms disappear and you have been cleared by a physician.
- Create and execute an up-to-date concussion protocol (see Brain 101: http://brain101.orcasinc.com/).

SECOND IMPACT SYNDROME (SIS)

- A second concussion shortly following an initial concussion that has not healed does not need to be strong in order to cause permanent disability or possibly death.[3]
- Consequences of the potential second concussion include cerebral swelling, brain herniation, and death.[8]
- In cases that are not fatal, long-term effects similar to a severe traumatic brain injury are usually present.[8]
- SIS is preventable by avoiding strenuous activity while recovering from a concussion.



Percentage of concussion patients experiencing various concussion symptoms.[9]

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The ThinkFirst Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through education, research and advocacy. For educational handouts, products and a chapter directory for school presentations go to:

www.thinkfirst.org

Sources

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