

MARCH Is Brain Injury Awareness Month

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a fall or a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Health care professionals may describe a concussion as a “mild” brain injury because concussions are usually not life-threatening. Even so, their effects can be serious.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Concussion?

 THINKING/ REMEMBERING	 PHYSICAL	 EMOTIONAL/ MOOD	 SLEEP DISTURBANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty thinking clearly • Feeling slowed down • Difficulty concentrating • Difficulty remembering new information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Nausea or vomiting (early on) • Balance problems • Dizziness • Fuzzy or blurry vision • Feeling tired, having no energy • Sensitivity to noise or light 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability • Sadness • More emotional • Nervousness or anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping more than usual • Sleeping less than usual • Trouble falling asleep

When to Seek Immediate Medical Attention:

Contact your health care professional or emergency department right away if you have any of the following danger signs after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body:

- * Headache that gets worse and does not go away.
- * Weakness, numbness or decreased coordination.
- * Repeated vomiting or nausea.
- * Slurred speech.



What Can I do to Help Prevent Concussion and other forms of TBI?

1. Wearing a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle.
2. Buckling your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt (according to the child's height, weight, and age).
3. Wearing a helmet and making sure your children wear helmets when:
 - * Riding a bike, motorcycle, snowmobile, scooter, or all-terrain vehicle;
 - * Playing a contact sport, such as football, ice hockey, lacrosse or boxing;
 - * Using in-line skates or riding a skateboard;
 - * Batting and running bases in baseball or softball;
 - * Riding a horse; or
 - * Skiing or snowboarding.

Most people with a concussion recover quickly and fully. But for some people, symptoms can last for days, weeks, or longer. In general, recovery may be slower among older adults, young children, and teens. Those who have had a concussion in the past are also at risk of having another one and may find that it takes longer to recover if they have another concussion.

Additional information about concussions is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion>.