

QuickSheet

Workplace Concussions: Identify, Respond, Prevent

Concussions can happen to anyone, not just athletes. Employees working at heights, researchers in laboratories, and theater arts students performing onstage or behind the scenes may be exposed to risks of head injury. Immediate medical attention is required after any head injury.

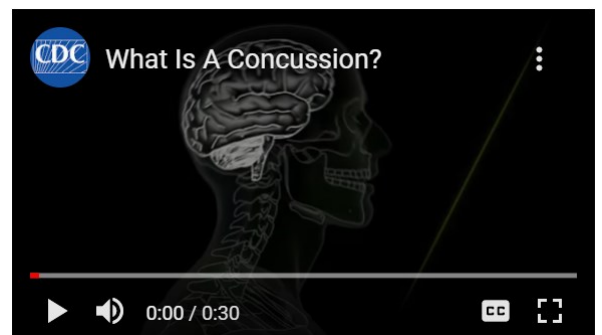
What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury - or TBI - caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells.

Signs and Symptoms

Signs and symptoms generally show up soon after the injury. However, you may not know how serious the injury is at first and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days.

You should continue to check for signs of concussion right after the injury and a few days after the injury. If concussion signs or symptoms get worse, you should go to the emergency department right away.



[Animation of a Concussion Video](#)

Concussion Signs Observed

- Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall.
- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (even briefly).
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.

Concussion Symptoms Reported

- Headache or "pressure" in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision.
- Bothered by light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down"

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Responding to a Possible Concussion

Immediate medical attention is required after any head injury. Even if the person shows no symptoms or any of the danger signs, they must:

- ⇒ Stop work
- ⇒ Tell their supervisor
- ⇒ Get immediate medical attention

Supervisors must ensure that employees know that head injuries can be very serious and require immediate medical attention. Supervisors need to submit an [Accident Report](#) as soon as possible after the incident. Employees recovering from a concussion must follow their medical provider's instructions. Restrictions may include avoiding activities that are mentally and/or physically demanding, driving and operating heavy machinery.

How can Concussions be Prevented?

Supervisors, building managers and employees can help to reduce the risk of falls, falling objects, and bumps to the head, and ensure that proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is available and used.

- ⇒ Remove tripping hazards. Make sure walkways and work spaces are free of clutter, cords, puddles of liquid, or anything else that can cause a slip, trip or fall.
- ⇒ Regularly conduct inspections relevant to the workplace.
- ⇒ Use signage to alert employees of:
 - Wet or slippery surfaces
 - Low overhangs/overhead clearance
 - Secured temporary floor covers
- ⇒ Wear safety footwear to prevent falls if you work in slippery or rough areas.
- ⇒ Clean and organize shelves, storage areas and work spaces to avoid falling objects.
- ⇒ Do not stand on chairs, desks or tables; use a foldable ladder-type step stool instead.
- ⇒ In storage areas, do not climb on shelves; place the heaviest objects on the floor or the lowest possible shelving.
- ⇒ Use ladders to properly access or retrieve materials in high places.
- ⇒ Use caution when working at heights. Know how to use fall protection and fall restraint equipment.
- ⇒ Ensure proper fit and condition of hard hats and other PPE.
- ⇒ Always drive safely and wear seat belt.

Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/basics.html>

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