

Concussions

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that occurs following a strong impact to the head caused by a fall, accident or extreme activity that results in an altered mental state, memory, and/or unconsciousness. The strong impact to the head can cause damage to the blood vessels and injury to the nerves of the brain. Anyone who receives a concussion is at risk of possible brain damage and disability and must seek immediate medical treatment.

History and Prevalence

In the 19th century, ancient Greeks mentioned concussions as a disruption of mental function associated with loss of speech, hearing and sight that is caused by a commotion of the brain. In the 10th century, Muhammad ibn Zakarīya Rāzi, a Persian physician, defined a concussion as a condition different from other types of head injuries. He was the first to use the term "cerebral concussion" as a condition with temporary loss of function without any physical damage. It was in the 16th century that the term "concussion" and its symptoms were first used and described by a physician named Ambroise Paré, (National Geographic, 2011).

Concussions are one of the most frequent causes of traumatic brain injury. The highest rates of concussion incidents are among young children and teenagers especially males who suffer from transient brain injury at about twice the rate of their female counterparts. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, athletes are at higher risk of concussion with a yearly estimate of 300,000 of sports-related concussions occurrences in the U.S. alone. Common sports in which concussion are particularly prevalent include football, boxing, and skateboarding to name a few.



Signs and Symptoms

The symptoms of a concussion develop within 24 to 72 hours after the injury. Not all people who sustain a concussion will experience unconsciousness or blackout. If a person receives a particularly hard hit to the head and experiences any of the following signs or symptoms, bring him or her to a nearby hospital

immediately. These signs and symptoms include: loss of consciousness, severe headache that gets

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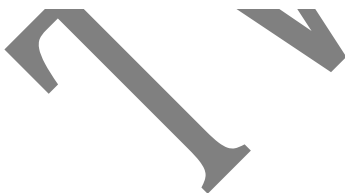
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Follow-up Care

As part of the follow-up care, patients are requested to attend an appointment after one week of the injury where a diagnostic examination may be performed to carefully monitor symptoms and improvements. Weekly follow-up appointments will continue until the symptoms have diminished. Rehabilitation programs should also be encouraged so that the patient can gradually resume their everyday activities. A referral for assessment of biopsychosocial factors will be made in patients with persistent symptoms after six weeks to determine the contributing factors and cause(s) of the symptoms.

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Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. Describe a concussion in your own words.
2. Who first used the term “concussion”?
3. Who
4. What
5. If a doctor is concerned about more persistent, severe symptoms, what might he or she do?
6. What
7. What are some possible complications due to receiving a concussion?
8. What are
9. For a
10. How has reading this article changed your mindset regarding concussions?

Reading Comprehension Questions: Answer Key

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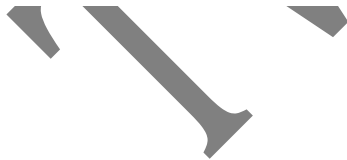
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