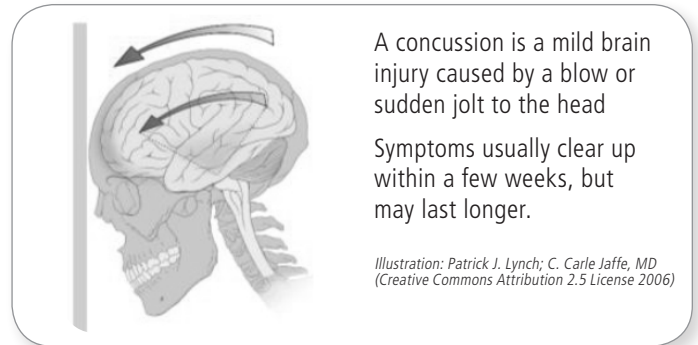


Concussion

What is a concussion?

A concussion happens when a sudden jolt or blow to the head disturbs the way your brain works. This disturbance can make you feel confused, disoriented, or dazed. It may also cause you to lose consciousness or to have memory loss (amnesia) about things that happened around the time of your injury. **If you have any of these symptoms after an injury, see a physician who specializes in concussion (contact one of the clinics listed at the end of this document) for an evaluation.** You don't have to be knocked out to have a concussion.

Concussions are common after motor vehicle accidents, falls, assaults, and sports collisions. (They are different from more severe brain injuries where there is loss of consciousness lasting longer than 30 minutes or amnesia lasting longer than 24 hours.) Most of the time, symptoms of a concussion go away within a few weeks. **To support a safe and speedy recovery, follow the doctor's instructions and the advice in this handout.**



A concussion is a mild brain injury caused by a blow or sudden jolt to the head

Symptoms usually clear up within a few weeks, but may last longer.

Illustration: Patrick J. Lynch; C. Carle Jaffe, MD
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What are the symptoms?

Concussion symptoms usually develop in the first few days after an injury. You may not notice problems until you return to school, work, and your daily life. For many people, symptoms resolve within a few days or weeks. Common symptoms include:

- **Physical:**
 - Headaches (very common)
 - Fatigue
 - Dizziness
 - Mild to moderate nausea and/or vomiting
 - Noise and light sensitivity

Signs to watch for in the first few days after concussion

For at least 24 hours after you leave the hospital, have someone stay with you to watch for warning signs of a complication from your concussion. **Call 911 or go directly to the nearest emergency department if you have any of these symptoms:**

- People can't wake you up
- Fainting or unusual sleepiness
- Confusion or strange behavior
- Can't remember new events
- Slurred speech, not making sense
- Seizure
- Sudden, severe nausea and vomiting
- Blurry or double vision
- Worsening head or neck pain
- Inability to control bladder or bowel function
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling in arms or legs
- Bleeding or draining of fluid from nose or ears

Also for the first 24 hours after a concussion:

Do NOT take any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications, such as naproxen or ibuprofen (Aleve or Advil).

These medications can increase the risk of bleeding in the brain.

For pain relief, take acetaminophen (Tylenol) instead.

If you take prescription pain pills for other injuries, talk with your doctor. Some prescription pain pills can make it harder to notice warning signs and get help in time.

Family or friends may notice these signs before you do. They should take you to the emergency department.

- **Thinking:**
 - Feeling mentally foggy
 - Difficulty concentrating — shorter attention span
 - Memory problems
 - Slowed thinking
- **Emotions:**
 - Irritability
 - Sadness
 - Feeling emotionally sensitive
 - Feeling nervous or anxious
- **Sleeping:**
 - Drowsiness, increased sleepiness
 - Difficulty sleeping

What can I do to promote a speedy recovery?

- **Sleep.** It is not uncommon for people to sleep longer than usual each day. Sleeping longer than normal is good for your recovery in the early stages.
- **Try to follow a routine.** Get up and do some low-demand activities during the day. Try to go to bed at the same time each day. Take a brief nap (no more than 1 to 2 hours) around midday if you feel you need it.
- **Listen to your body.** If you're feeling tired, or symptoms are getting worse, take a break from what you're doing for a while. Pushing through your symptoms to "get the job done" may slow your recovery.
- **Avoid risky activities that could lead to further injury.** These include cycling, climbing, sports, horse riding, skiing, etc — anything that requires a helmet or that could result in falling or injury. A second concussion before your symptoms fully resolve can be FATAL.
- **Do not drive unless your doctor says it's okay,** especially if you're feeling tired.
- **Avoid high stimulus environments** — such as busy shopping malls, noisy restaurants, rock concerts, or parties.

When can I return to full activities?

Returning to full activity varies from person to person and depends on how quickly your symptoms improve. **Before you return to vigorous activities, wait until a doctor says it's okay.**

What should I do if my symptoms don't resolve?

If your symptoms are still interfering with your daily activities after the first week — or if you have additional questions — call one of the clinics below and request a "concussion specialist evaluation." Further treatment of your symptoms can dramatically improve your outcomes. Untreated symptoms can harm relationships, work or school performance, emotional health, and your quality of life.

- In Murray, Utah
Neurosciences Institute – Brain Injury & Concussion Clinic
5171 S. Cottonwood St., Suite 810 (South Office Building),
Murray, UT 84107
Phone: 801-507-9800
- In Murray, Utah
The Orthopedic Specialty Hospital (TOSH) Sports Concussion Clinic
Suite 475 TOSH Medical Tower,
5770 S. 250 E, Bldg. 5, Murray, Utah 84107
Phone: (801) 314-2210
- In Salt Lake City, Utah
Primary Children's Hospital – General Pediatric Rehabilitation
100 N Mario Capecchi Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84113
Phone: (801) 662-4949
- In the Salt Lake Valley, Utah
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Intermountain Sports Medicine Specialty Group
Alta View and Riverton Orthopedic Clinics
Phone: (801) 501-6150
- In Provo, Utah
Utah Valley Orthopedics & Sports Medicine
East side of Utah Valley Regional Medical Center
1157 North 300 West, Suite 201, Provo, Utah 84604
Phone: (801) 357-1200
- In St. George, Utah
Intermountain Southern Utah Neurosciences Institute
652 S. Medical Center Dr. – Suite 420, St. George, UT 84790
Phone: (435) 251-6800

Where can I learn more?

You can learn more about head injuries on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website:
www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury