



SAFETY MATTERS

RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE MARCH 22, 2024

- OBSERVED SIGNS OF A CONCUSSION
- REPORTED SYMPTOMS
- ACTIONS TO TAKE IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED

CONCUSSION ABCs

OBJECTIVE Understand the signs and symptoms of a concussion and what do if you suspect a student or employee has a concussion.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) that results from a bump, blow, jolt to the head, or 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, stretching and damaging the brain cells and creating chemical changes in the brain.

While some research shows that the young brain can be resilient, it may also be more susceptible to the chemical changes that occur in the brain after a concussion. These changes can lead to a set of symptoms affecting the student's cognitive, physical, emotional, and sleep functions. Concussions affect people differently. Most students will have symptoms that last for a few days or a week. A more serious concussion can last for weeks, months, or even longer.

Each year hundreds of thousands of students sustain a concussion as a result of a fall, motor-vehicle crash, collision on the playground or sports field, or other activity. Most will recover quickly and fully. However, school professionals will often be challenged with helping return a student to school who may still be experiencing concussion symptoms - symptoms that can result in learning problems and poor academic performance.



KNOW YOUR CONCUSSION ABCs

- **A - Assess the situation**
- **B - Be alert for signs and symptoms**
- **C - Contact a health care professional**

OBSERVED SIGNS

- Individual appears dazed or stunned
- Confused about assignment or task
- Forgets instructions
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Unable to recall events before/after the hit or fall

REPORTED SYMPTOMS

- Headache or pressure in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or lack of balance
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Not “feeling right” or “feeling down”

ACTIONS TO TAKE IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED

If you suspect a student or staff member has a concussion, take the following 4 steps:

1. Remove the student or staff member from the activity immediately. When in doubt, sit them out.
2. Ensure that the individual is evaluated by a health care professional with experience in concussion evaluations.
3. If it is a student injury, inform the student’s listed emergency contact about the possible concussion.
4. Keep the individual out of the specified activity or task, or activities that could incur similar results. A designated health care professional should provide documentation that the individual is symptom-free and is medically cleared to return.

Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Concussion Fact Sheet For Parents](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: HEADS UP to Schools, Know Your Concussion ABCs](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Sports Concussion Policies and Laws](#)
- [Concussion Alliance: Concussion Guide for College Educators](#)

This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.

