



## **Prevention of Repeat Injury**

### **What is a mild traumatic brain injury or concussion?**

- A mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI), also known as a concussion, refers to an injury to the head that results in a change in how the brain normally functions.<sup>1</sup>
- A person may or may not lose consciousness when a concussion occurs.
- While the term “mild” is used to describe this type of traumatic brain injury, the injury should be taken seriously and close attention should be paid to an individual’s symptoms. If you think you might have a concussion, you should be seen by a health care provider right away.<sup>2</sup>

#### **To Provide You With the Best Care Possible, Tell Your Health Care Provider About the Following:<sup>2</sup>**

- If you drink alcohol
- If you take any prescription medications (such as blood thinners)
- If you take over the counter medications (such as aspirin)
- If you take supplements, vitamins, or herbal remedies

### **Under what circumstances do most traumatic brain injuries occur?<sup>3</sup>**

- Most traumatic brain injuries, including concussions, occur in a non-deployed setting.
- Vehicle crashes occurring in privately owned or military vehicles, falls, sports accidents, or recreation related injuries account for most traumatic brain injuries.

### **Why is preventing a second or repeat concussion important?**

- Among the majority of people who sustain a concussion, symptoms resolve in the first few days or weeks following the injury. When following recovery guidance from a health care provider, it is important to allow time for rest to promote optimal healing.
- A repeat concussion(s) could result in slowed healing or more severe or prolonged symptoms, especially without supervision from a health care provider.

### **What steps can you take to help prevent concussion and repeat injury following a concussion?<sup>2</sup>**

- Follow your health care provider’s instruction for rest and resumption of sports and activities.



- Avoid drinking alcohol.
- Do not drive a vehicle or operate recreational equipment after drinking alcohol or taking prescription medication, which can interfere with your ability to drive or make decisions.
- Do not ride as a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who has been drinking alcohol or taking drugs or prescription medications, which can interfere with their ability to drive or make decisions.
- Wear a seatbelt while driving or riding as a passenger in a vehicle.
- Avoid contact sports (e.g. football, hockey). This is especially important in the time frame following a concussion in order to prevent a repeat injury.

## **Return to Your Health Care Provider Immediately If You Experience the Following Symptoms After a Concussion:<sup>4</sup>**

- Worsening headache
- Unsteadiness on feet
- Double vision
- Decreasing level of alertness
- Disorientation/confusion
- Repeated vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Weakness or numbness in the arms and legs
- Unusual behavior
- Something just isn't right

## **Additional Information**

- [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#)
- [Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Brainline.org](#)



## References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/index.html>. Updated May 29, 2014. Accessed July 10, 2014.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/what\\_to\\_do.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/what_to_do.html). Update March 8, 2010. Accessed July 11, 2014.
3. Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center. <http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/dod-worldwide-numbers-tbi>. Updated June 30, 2014. Accessed July 10, 2014.
4. Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center. [http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/sites/default/files/2012\\_Acute%20tri-fold\\_lo-res\\_FINAL.pdf](http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/sites/default/files/2012_Acute%20tri-fold_lo-res_FINAL.pdf). Accessed July 10, 2014.