

MARCH is Brain Injury Awareness Month!

SPREAD THE WORD



Welcome to Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Awareness Month. That's right, every March; we turn our focus to Traumatic Brain Injury awareness, same as we do for Breast Cancer awareness every October. SYC takes TBI awareness very seriously and as such, we feel it is extremely important you are made aware of this "Silent Epidemic", their symptoms, tips for prevention, and those treatment methods that promote safe healing.

So what is a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)? Simply put for us non-medical types, it is when an external force (ball strike (soccer), helmet collision (football), a fall (Cheerleading), etc.) traumatically injures the brain. And for our purposes here at SYC, we will focus on one type of TBI; the Concussion. However medically, TBI includes such events as violent blows or jolts to the head or body with respect to vehicle accidents, significant falls, and even objects penetrating the skull.

In general, there are three levels of concussions: mild, moderate, and severe. Don't let these names fool you. A mild concussion is just as serious as a moderate or even severe one. You may think the names refer to loss of consciousness and/or mental alteration as a result of the trauma. But they don't. In many cases, loss of consciousness is never experienced but everlasting affects are present. Don't let the name fool you. The resulting damage can be the same for all three -- a 'Concussion' does not discriminate. Note that a mild concussion may cause temporary dysfunction of brain cells, whereas a more serious concussion may result in bruising, torn tissues, bleeding and other physical damage to the brain that can result in long-term complications.

A concussion can change you - literally and figuratively. Your personality is affected. Your energy levels and sleep patterns can change. A confused soccer player staring the wrong way down the field, a cheerleader who can't remember the next move in her routine, a football player who has a difficult studying in school, a field hockey player, who used to type at 75 words per minute with zero mistakes, now has to take her time and correct many keystroke errors as she goes because her brain gets confused with letters - You probably know or have known some of these players in school and in the community. Concussions are a real epidemic and we all need to be more aware of how to identify and treat.

So you are not a doctor, what do you do? Well, if you suspect an athlete of sustaining a head injury, stop them and remove them from their practice or game. Talk to him/her and ask some simple situational questions (what is your name, what day is it, where are you, what is your telephone number, etc.). Observe their behavior. If you feel there is any question regarding their condition, seek professional medical attention (Emergency Room, Urgent Care, Primary Care Physician, etc.).

SYC Staff (Organization Officials, Commissioners, League Directors, Team Managers, Coaches, and Trainers) live by the SYC Mantra:

When in Doubt...Sit Them Out!

Resources for Additional Information on Concussions:

[SYC Coaches Concussion Center](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Mayo Clinic](#)

[WebMD](#)

[United States Library of Medicine](#)

Some interesting facts about Traumatic Brain Injuries (Concussions):

- Brain injuries are most often caused by sports injuries than any other event such as automobile accidents, simple falls on the playground, or at work or in the home.
- An estimated 1.6 million to 3.8 million sports-related concussions occur each year.
- An estimated 1.5 million head injuries occur every year in the United States emergency rooms.
- Every year, approximately 52,000 deaths occur from traumatic brain injury.
- Traumatic Brain Injuries are the leading cause of death and disability in children and adults from ages 1 to 44.
- At least 5.3 million Americans, 2 percent of the U.S. population, currently live with disabilities resulting from TBI.
- Moderate & severe head injury (respectively) is associated with a 2.3 and 4.5 times increased risk of Alzheimer's disease.
- Males are about twice as likely as females to experience a TBI.
- Exposures to blasts are a leading cause of TBI among active duty military personnel in war zones.
- Veterans' advocates believe that between 10 and 20 percent of Iraq veterans, or 150,000 and 300,000 service members have some level of TBI.
- 30 percent of soldiers admitted to Walter Reed Army Medical Center have been diagnosed as having had a TBI.

Questions regarding the SYC Concussion Education & Training Program, please send all inquiries to Woody Weir, Concussion.Support@sycva.com.



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Concussion Quick Reference Guide

Signs Observed by Coach	Symptoms Reported by Athlete	Danger Signs (Seek emergent care)
Appears Dazed or stunned	Headache or "pressure" in head	One pupil larger than the other
Confused about assignment or position	Nausea or vomiting	Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
Forgets sports plays	Dizziness or problems with balance	A headache that not only does not diminish, but gets worse
Unsure of game, score, or opponent	Double/blurred vision	Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
Moves clumsily	Sensitivity to light	Repeated vomiting or nausea
Answers questions slowly	Sensitivity to noise	Slurred speech
Loses consciousness	Feeling sluggish, tired, or groggy	Convulsions or seizures
Shows behavior/personality changes	Concentration/memory problems	Becomes increasingly confused, restless, or agitated
Can't recall events prior to injury	Confusion	Cannot recognize people or places
Can't recall events after injury	Does not "feel right"	Has unusual behavior