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If you follow sports at all, you have probably noticed an increased awareness of sports concussions. Now obviously the most visible emphasis comes in sports that involve physical collisions, and those that receive the most media attention such as football, where concussions seem to be occurring as often as touchdowns. But concussions can happen at any time and in a variety of sports regardless of whether there is physical contact or not; and this includes the sport of diving.

## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

According to the [Center for Disease Control](#), "a concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a 'ding,' 'getting your bell rung,' or what seems to be mild bump or blow to the head can be serious."

If you apply that definition to what you see on the pool deck, then any coach or administrator should be able to see how the circumstances would arise that would lead to a concussion, in many other ways other than just hitting the diving board. Examples of acts that could lead to a concussion include:

- A diver slips and falls on the pool deck, or platform surface.
- A diver hits their head on a railing.
- A diver hits their head on the [trampoline frame](#).
- A diver's head comes in contact with another diver during dryland drills, or a coach during a drill that requires spotting.
  
- A diver hits their head on a piece of equipment in a [dryland setting](#).
- A diver hits their head on the [springboard](#).
- A diver slips getting out of the pool and hits their head on the gutter.
- A diver has a particularly hard [smack](#).

The examples of what could cause a concussion are unlimited, and they can also be as simple, and unnoticed as just a bump on the head.

So even if a simple bump on the head goes unnoticed, there are numerous signs and indicators that a diver has a concussion?

## SIGNS OF A CONCUSSION

Whether a coach witnesses an incident or accident or not, there are numerous signs that indicate a possible concussion. If a diver is aimlessly walking around the pool deck, and you notice a knot on the their forehead, there is a good chance they might have a concussion.

### *Signs Observed by the Coach*

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about what dives or what board they were on
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly

- Loses consciousness
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to the incident
- Can't recall events after the incident

#### *Symptoms Reported by the Diver*

- Headache or pressure in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CONCUSSION**

If you suspect that a diver has sustained a concussion, there are several areas that need to be addressed, beginning with stopping that diver from participating ... immediately.

1. If you suspect a concussion then the athlete should cease any and all workouts and activity until they have been cleared to return by a certified medical profession. There is no middle ground here, it is black and white.
1. Second, you should make sure ensure that the diver is evaluated by certified medical personnel before they can return to active participation. That means a professional experienced in evaluating and treating concussions.
2. Third, notify the parents or guardians that you suspect a concussion, and help to educate them concerning concussions and the steps they must follow in order to help their diver return to practice or competition.
3. Fourth, keep the diver out of practice and competition until they have been cleared to resume activity by a licensed professional experienced in evaluating and treating concussions.
4. Finally, document everything that occurs from the moment you suspect a concussion.

Source: [Center for Disease Control](#).