

Diving is a fun activity that people throughout the world engage in. However, diving is not without risk, so take a moment to *Think First* and participate in a smart way in order to reduce your risk for injury!

Test Your Knowledge

Q: What is the most common level of spinal cord injury following diving accidents?

A: Cervical five (10).

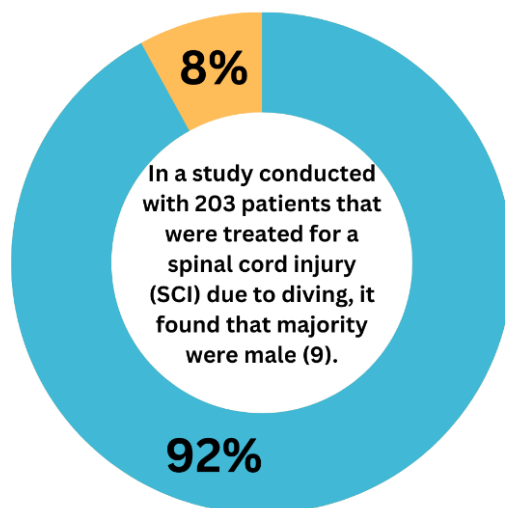
Q: What are some symptoms of decompression illness?

A: Joint pain, headache, visual disturbances, erythematous and pruritic skin rash (11, 12).

KNOW THE FACTS

The magnitude of the problem in numbers (1-4):

- In the United States there are approximately 9 million certified divers
- There are 2 fatalities per 100,000 dives
- There are more than 1000 diving-related injuries annually, with over 10% of those being fatal
- In the United States, spinal cord injury (SCI) due to diving is the fourth leading cause of SCI, accounting for 8.5% of overall cases
- SCI following diving accidents range from 1.2–22%
- Most of the SCI due to diving affect the cervical spine



- Men treated for a SCI in the study
- Women treated for a SCI in the study

Diving Fast Facts



Types of Diving Injuries (5-7):

- Barotrauma
- Decompression illness
- Air gas embolism (present in 7 per 100,000)
- Drowning related injuries
- Trauma; cervical spinal cord injury most common injuries

Risk factors associated with diving injuries (1, 2, 8-10):

- Males
- Young in age
- Rapid ascents with missed decompression stops
- Improper breathing techniques
- Unfamiliarity with water depth and environment
- Diving alone
- Diving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs
- Diving at night
- Inexperience

ThinkFirst about...

... protecting yourself and others from injury!

Diving Fast Facts

PREVENTION TIPS ⁽⁹⁾

- Enter water feet first to check depth
- Dive in waters you know well
- Complete appropriate training prior to diving
- Dive with others
- Do not dive if one is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs

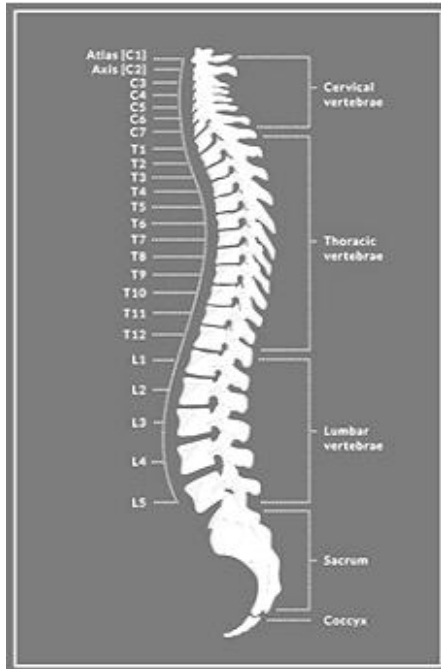


Diagram depicting the divisions of the spinal cord.

WATER SAFETY TIPS ⁽¹³⁾

- Learn to swim before getting in the water
- Be aware of your limits
- Swim in supervised areas only
- Do not float where you can't swim
- Swim with a buddy
- Wear a life jacket when boating
- Stay up-to-date on currents in a lake or ocean
- Monitor the weather
- Do not mess around in the water
- Do not dive into shallow water

Sources:

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ThinkFirst
National Injury Prevention Foundation

The ThinkFirst Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through education, research and advocacy. Visit our website to learn more and use our chapter directory to locate a chapter near you — your resource for injury prevention presentations.

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