

HOME CARE FOR HEAD INJURIES

Your child suffered a head injury today while participating in their extracurricular sport practice/competition. A mild traumatic brain injury is a disturbance in brain function caused by a direct or indirect force to the head. A head injury assessment has been performed and no serious complications have been found at this time. In the light blue box is a list of typical signs and symptoms of head injuries.

Physician Referral Checklist:

A head injury can increase in severity at any time; therefore an athlete with a concussion should not be left alone. St. John's Sports Medicine requires all head injuries be evaluated by a physician. Clearance from a physician must be obtained before the athlete is allowed to return to play.

At this time I do not feel your child needs an immediate referral, unless you observe any of the following:

1. A headache that gets worse.
2. Repeated vomiting.
3. Inability to recognize people or places.
4. Weakness or numbness in the face, arm, and/or leg.
5. Change in breathing rate, difficulty breathing or bluish tint to skin.
6. Unequal pupil size (dark areas in center of eyes).
7. A loss of consciousness for any amount of time.
8. Difficulty speaking, slurred, and/or incoherent speech.
9. An increase or worsening of any of the symptoms marked in the light blue box.
10. Increased drowsiness or cannot be awakened (woken up).
11. Unusual behavior, confusion, or irritability.
12. Decreased balance
13. Unusual activity or you do not feel comfortable with the situation.



If your child's condition worsens at any time or you become concerned, you should immediately report to the emergency room for further evaluation by a physician, or call 911.

TYPICAL SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

The particular symptoms your child is experiencing are marked below.

- Headache
- "Don't feel right"
- Pressure in head
- Difficulty concentrating
- Neck pain
- Difficulty remembering
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Fatigue or low energy
- Dizziness or Lightheadedness
- Confusion
- Blurred or Double Vision
- Drowsiness
- Balance problems
- Trouble falling asleep (if applicable)
- Sensitivity to light
- More emotional
- Sensitivity to noise
- Irritability
- Feeling slowed down
- Sadness
- Feeling like "in a fog"
- Nervous or anxious

Recommendations

- Do not use aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for pain (i.e. Ibuprofen, Aleve, Advil, Aspirin)
- Acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol) may be used sparingly under the discretion of the parent or guardian
- Limit mental activities such as computer usage, text messaging, t.v., video games, etc.
- Avoid activity that causes or worsens signs and symptoms until medically cleared
- Rest is encouraged
- Do not drive until medically cleared
- No sleeping tablets
- No alcohol

Graduated Return to Play Protocol

The following are excerpts from the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport, 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport:

The cornerstone of concussion management is physical and cognitive rest until symptoms resolve and then a graduated program of exertion prior to medical clearance and return to play. The recovery and outcome of this injury may be modified by a number of factors that may require more sophisticated management strategies.

YOUR CHILD MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING IN ORDER TO RETURN TO FULL COMPETITION:

- ___ **Written clearance from a physician (M.D. or D.O.) prior to initiation of the return to play protocol**
- ___ **At least 7 days symptom free for full activity**
- ___ **Clearance from the on-site Athletic Trainer after completion of return to play protocol**

REFERENCES:

- National Athletic Trainer's Association Position Statement: Management of Sport-Related Concussion <http://www.nata.org/statements/position/concussion.pdf>
- Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport, 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Zurich, Nov. 2008



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