

Head Injury Instructions: The First 24-48 Hours

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This document is intended to assist you in monitoring the recovery of your son or daughter, who has been diagnosed with a concussion. When someone suffers a concussion, there is the potential for damage to the brain. Sometimes, signs and symptoms from a concussion do not appear until several hours after the injury has occurred. *Therefore, any athlete with a suspected concussion should be monitored for deterioration, should not be left alone, and should not drive a motor vehicle for the first 24 hours after the injury.*

This sheet is to serve as a reminder of what to look for over the next 24-48 hours. *It is not necessary to awaken the victim after he/she has fallen asleep.*

Go to the emergency room at once (or call 911) if your injured child:

1. Develops a headache that gets worse with time
2. Is very drowsy and cannot be awakened
3. Does not recognize people or places
4. Vomits more than twice
5. Behaves unusually, seems confused or disoriented
6. Seems unusually emotional or irritable
7. Has seizures (uncontrollable jerking of the arms and/or legs)
8. Has weakness or numbness in the arms and/or legs
9. Shows balance problems or is unsteady on his/her feet
10. Has slurred speech
11. Has unequal pupils (for the first time)
12. Develops vision problems (for the first time)
13. Develops stiffening in the neck

Remember, it is always better to be safe. If you are having doubts about any of the signs listed above, go to the hospital for an evaluation!

Do not give the victim anti-inflammatory medicines for headaches symptoms. Examples of medicines to AVOID are: aspirin (Goody Powders and other brands), ibuprofen (Advil, Mediprin, Nuprin, and other brands), naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn, and other brands), Celebrex, Relafen, Orudis, and Mobic. **ALSO, DO NOT GIVE YOUR INJURED CHILD PRESCRIPTION PAIN PILLS.**

It is probably safe to give an athlete with a head injury acetaminophen (brand name Tylenol and others) for a mild to moderate headache, just as long as there is no history of liver disease or a drug allergy to acetaminophen.

Finally, keep the athlete's diet light for the first several hours. Absolutely no alcohol should be consumed while symptoms are present in any individual with a head injury.

NEVER LET A CONCUSSED ATHLETE PARTICIPATE IN STRENUOUS EXERCISE UNTIL EVALUATED AND RELEASED BY A DOCTOR OR ATHLETIC TRAINER.