Head Injury Follow Up for Home Care

Your athlete has suffered a blow to the head and has a suspected head injury (possibly a concussion). Since a concussion is a disturbance in brain function caused by a direct or indirect force to the head, it can result in a variety of nonspecific symptoms (like those listed below) and often does not involve loss of consciousness. A careful assessment of symptoms has been carried out and no sign of any serious complications has been found. However, should you have any doubt or uncertainty, or should symptoms increase in severity or number, then you should seek treatment in the nearest emergency room.

Pursuant to Colorado Senate Bill 11- If a youth athlete is removed from play...and the signs and symptoms cannot be readily explained by a condition other than concussion, the school coach or private or public recreational facility’s designated personnel shall notify the athlete’s parent or legal guardian and shall not permit the youth athlete to return to play or participate in any supervised team activities involving physical exertion, including games, competitions, or practices, until he or she is evaluated by a health care provider (MD, DO, PA, NP, PsyD) and receives written clearance to return to play from the health care provider.

Symptoms noted on sideline:
- Balance Problems
- Dizziness
- Nausea / Vomiting
- Discernable Weakness
- Unequal Pupil Size / Reaction
- Blurred/ Double Vision
- Headache
- Confusion
- Irritability
- Sensitivity to Light
- Fatigue
- Emotions out of normal
- Drowsiness
- Slurred/ Slow Speech
- Unusual/ Bizarre Behavior
- Difficulty with Concentration
- Difficulty Remembering
- Feeling in a ‘Fog’
- Depression
- Sensitivity to Noise

Symptoms that warrant immediate physician evaluation:
- Headache that worsens
- Are very drowsy or cannot be awakened
- Cannot recognize people or places
- Have repeated vomiting
- Behave unusually or seem confused
- Are very irritable
- Seizures
- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs
- Are unsteady on their feet or become uncoordinated
- Have slurred speech
- Difficulty remembering recent events or meaningful facts

Next several days Instructions:
It is OK to:
- **Rest.** (avoid exercise & noisy/stimulating environments)
- **USE acetaminophen (Tylenol) for headaches**
- **Return to School** when symptoms decrease
- **Sleep**

Do NOT:
- **Use ibuprofen (Advil, or other NSAIDS)**
- **Drink Alcohol**

Suggestions to reduce symptoms
- **Limit extended brain activity** (ie. reading, studying, texting, videos & gaming) until symptoms reduce
- **Eat and Drink Properly**
- **Avoid heart-rate increasing activities**
Avoid noisy or high stimulating environments

Use Ice on head/neck as needed for comfort

How long can you expect to be out?
Head injuries are healed only by rest and are individual in their healing. Some will heal within several days, and others may take several months. Most young athletes recover within 2 weeks

What Happens Now?

☐ Call to your pediatrician/physician and schedule an appointment within one week.
☐ Follow up with our school nurse during the school day & the athletic trainer (ATC) after school each day for testing and symptom assessment. (These results can be taken to your doctor appointment.)
☐ Depending on results from the doctor and from our athletic trainer, your students’ teachers will be informed about the injury.
☐ Coaches will be informed and under no circumstance will your athlete participate in practice/games. Depending on severity, they may or may not attend practice/games.
☐ When athlete is symptom free for several days and has passed all school tests, schedule another appointment with your pediatrician/physician for follow-up note (some physicians will require periodic follow-ups before this clearance note)
☐ Obtain a written note from the pediatrician/physician allowing us to begin our return to play criteria
☐ Obtain forms from the sports medicine staff to be given to your pediatrician/physician.

When an athlete has passed all RHS concussion tests AND has WRITTEN approval from a physician, we will begin our return to play criteria:

Return to Play Criteria:

Step 1: NO physical activity or noisy environments, generous rest until symptom free, this may need to include mental rest if symptoms are severe. (school, video games, etc.)

Step 2: When symptom free, begin low level/ light aerobic activities such as stationary bike and walking (keeping intensity <70% of maximum heart rate)

Step 3: Moderate Exertion, sport-specific training without pads. (running, skating, jump shots, shots on goal, etc.). No head impact activities. Resume weight lifting (reduce lifting weight by 50%)

Step 4: Heavy exertion, non-contact drills specific to sport. May return to weight lifting

Step 5: Full contact in practice setting/ scrimmage

Step 6: Game-level Play/ Activity

*An athlete must remain asymptomatic to progress to the next level. If symptoms recur, the athlete must return to the previous level. Each step generally requires 1 day but could take longer*

Thank you,
Rampart Sports Medicine Staff
Erin Schneider, Head Athletic Trainer
(719) 234-2164