

This is a medical follow-up sheet for your health and safety. Often the signs and symptoms of head injuries do not appear immediately after a trauma but hours after the injury itself. The purpose of this fact sheet is to alert you to signs and symptoms of significant head injuries.

The appearance OR WORSENING of any of these symptoms tells you that you may have sustained a significant head injury that *requires medical attention*. If any of these symptoms appear OR WORSEN, contact your family physician or report to your local Emergency Room. Very sick people should be transported to the emergency room by ambulance; do not hesitate to call for an ambulance if you think one may be necessary.

If you develop one or more of the following symptoms following a head injury **or if existing symptoms get worse**, medical help should be sought.

- **Loss of consciousness**
- **Severe headache**
- **Unequal pupils**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Abnormal drowsiness or sleepiness**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Persistent ringing in the ears**
- **Stiffening of the neck**
- **Convulsions**
- **Dizziness, poor balance, or unsteadiness**
- **Bleeding or clear fluid from ears/nose**
- **Weakness in either arm or leg**
- **Difficulty remembering recent events/facts**
- **Mental confusion or strangeness**
- **Slurring of the speech**

Head injuries can present signs and symptoms that seem funny and are taken too lightly. You should rest and generally take it easy until you are feeling well.

Medications/Cold Packs: Refrain from taking aspirin, ibuprofen, and other medications unless ordered by medical personnel. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be taken for existing symptoms; seek medical attention if symptoms are getting worse. Use ice packs for the head and neck as needed for comfort.

Sleep/Rest: You can go to sleep. Rest is very important to allow the brain to recover. Eat a light diet.

Return to School: Return to school when you feel up to it. **BEFORE RETURNING TO CLASSES, REPORT TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE.**

Activities: In general, you should avoid any and all activities (mental or physical) that make you feel worse. Avoid recreational and sports activities until your athletic trainer or doctor has okayed them; **REPORT TO ATHLETIC TRAINER BEFORE RESUMING SPORT.**

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Most children and teens recover from sports-related concussion within 2 to 4 weeks. However, some may suffer from persistent symptoms. During a concussion recovery period, you should be in regular contact with your Safe Sports athletic trainer, school nurse and/or your doctor regarding your child's recovery.

Talk to your athletic trainer/doctor if symptoms are worsening, or if symptoms persist more than 7-10 days. Examples of symptoms that may persist:

- Difficulty concentrating; mentally foggy
- Difficulty learning & memory problems
- Headaches
- Mood changes (irritable, sad, nervous)
- Increased sensitivity to noise or light
- Dizziness, balance problems, or nausea
- Fatigue, drowsiness, sleep changes
- Difficulty in relationships with others

What to Expect During Recovery

Neurocognitive and balance testing are used to help assess brain function following a sports-related concussion. SSN partners with consultants who examine post-injury scores and compare them to baseline and/or normative scores to manage safe return to play. Whenever possible, the first post-injury test is administered within 24-72 hours of the injury. Additional testing is administered when symptoms have resolved and/or at other appropriate intervals during the recovery process. SSN baseline and post-concussion testing with two platforms:

- **ImPACT:** Computerized assessment tool used to assess memory, reaction time, and processing speed in athletes aged 12+.
- **C3 Logix:** An iPad-based assessment tool to help assess symptom load, orientation & balance.

STAGE	Expectations/Instructions
New Injury (First 24-48 hours post-injury)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Rest (No sports, gym, etc.) • Mental Rest (Limit screen time, phone, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit school attendance/schoolwork based on symptoms • Sleep, eat a healthy diet, hydrate
Initial Injury Evaluation (Within 48 hours post-injury)	See athletic trainer or doctor for evaluation Assess symptom load, orientation, memory, concentration, balance, etc.
Follow-up Evaluation and Testing (24-72 hours post-injury)	AT will administer ImPACT, C3 Logix & other tests, if athlete is in school
Daily Follow-Up (until symptom-free)	School nurse will perform a Graded Symptom Checklist with the athlete at the start of the school day. Nurse will discuss athlete symptoms with the school AT (who may repeat the symptom checklist in the afternoon)
Persistent Symptoms (1-4 weeks post-injury)	Testing repeated if scores have not returned to baseline on initial post-injury test; Consider referral to specialist if symptoms persist or testing is below baseline (e.g., neuropsychologist, neurologist, physical therapist)
Symptom Resolution (time varies)	Symptoms may resolve before concussion test scores return to baseline. Athlete may begin exercise progression once symptom free. Not allowed to return to contact activities until scores have normalized.
Full Return to Play: (criteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptom-free (rest & with exercise) • Concussion test scores returned to baseline • Returned to school full-time/full school load • Completed 6 stage exercise progression • Parental consent signed • Doctor clearance note (if evaluated by a doctor)

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