



Head Injury Instruction Sheet

Instead of writing an article this month discussing a particular injury, we've decided to design a "Head Injury Cheat Sheet" for parents, coaches, and players to have with them during games, practices, and at home. The purpose of this "Cheat Sheet" is to alert you and your family of the signs and symptoms of significant head injuries. Quite often these signs and symptoms do not appear immediately after trauma, but hours after the initial injury itself.

It is essential that the injured athlete remain under the observation of someone for the first 24 hours, but waking the athlete during the night is not necessary, unless the athlete suffered a loss of consciousness or is still experiencing significant signs at bed time. Do not consume alcohol, drugs, or medication unless a physician approves their use because they may mask certain symptoms. Avoiding, computer use, watching television, and text messaging will decrease the possibility of further symptoms which may delay the brain's healing process. Driving and exercising while symptomatic can also delay the healing process, and should be avoided as well. It is important to rest and maintain a light diet during the initial stages of a head injury, and once a more severe injury is ruled. An ice pack on the head or neck may be used for comfort.

Attached is a printable version of our Concussions Signs and Symptoms Evaluation. For further information regarding concussion management and evaluation, please refer to the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) position statement.

<http://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/MgmtOfSportRelatedConcussion.pdf>

About the Author



Paul Schmidt grew up in Arlington Heights, and went to Northern Illinois University where he obtained a bachelor degree in Physical Education/Sports Medicine, in 1995. Currently, Paul treats patients as a Physical Therapist and Athletic Trainer at IBJI in Glenview and leads the Sports Medicine Special Interest Group. For Paul's full bio, visit ibjirehab.com/affiliates/trevian/staff.

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Concussion Evaluation Form

Signs Observed by the Coach and/or Parent

- Appears to be disoriented;
- Confused about or forgets assignment;
- Unsure of game, score, or opponent;
- Moves awkwardly;
- Answers questions slowly or unresponsive;
- Loses consciousness (even temporarily);
- Shows behavior or personality change;
- Forgets events prior to hit (retrograde amnesia);
- Forgets events after hit (anterograde amnesia);
- Vomiting;
- Unequal eye movement or tracking;
- One or both eyelids not completely open.

Symptoms Reported by the Athlete

- Headache;
- Nausea;
- Balance problems or dizziness;
- Double or fuzzy vision;
- Sensitive to light or noise;
- Feeling sluggish;
- Feeling sleepy;
- Feeling “foggy”;
- Change in sleep pattern (post trauma);
- Concentration or memory problems;
- “Ringing” in the ears;
- Stiffening of neck;
- Loss of appetite;
- Weakness of the arms and legs.

On-Field Cognitive Testing

General Awareness

Ask the athlete the following questions:

- Where are you?
- What city is this?
- What is the date?
- Who is the opposing team?

Concentration

Ask the athlete to do the following:

- Repeat the months backwards, starting with the current month.
- Repeat numbers backward:
Example: 15 (51 is correct), 183 (381 is correct)

Testing for Anterograde Amnesia

Ask the athlete to repeat any three words.

Example: Goal, night fire

or

Ask the athlete to repeat a number combination.

Example: 4, 7, 9, 1

** (The athlete must be able to remember the combination for a period of time.)*

Testing for Retrograde Amnesia

Ask the athlete the following questions:

- What is your phone number?
- What did you have for breakfast?
- What do you remember just prior to the hit?
- Do you remember the hit?

If these signs or symptoms are reported the athlete **MUST STOP PLAYING IMMEDIATELY** and seek further evaluation. Any failure to these tests should be considered abnormal and a physician's evaluation is recommended. Symptoms may worsen with further exertion and increase the risk of further injury or death. Any athlete that experiences a loss of consciousness or amnesia should **IMMEDIATELY BE REFERRED** to a physician.

For more information, please contact an Illinois Bone and Joint Institute location near you. For a list of our locations, please visit the websites below:

www.ibji.com

www.ibjirehab.com/locations