

Head Injury Fact Sheet*

Often, signs of a head injury do not appear immediately after trauma, but hours and even days after an injury. The purpose of this fact sheet is to alert you to the symptoms of head injuries that may occur several hours afterward, point out the seriousness of these symptoms and that they require immediate medical help, and instruct you in the proper care of head injury symptoms.

WATCH FOR THE FOLLOWING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS THAT MAY INDICATE A SERIOUS HEAD INJURY WITH INCREASING PRESSURE FROM BRAIN SWELLING AND/OR BLEEDING. IF YOU GET ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR AND ACTIVATE THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SYSTEM (CALL 911) OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY.

- ◆ Continuing or worsening headache
- ◆ Loss of appetite, nausea or vomiting
- ◆ Abnormal or increased drowsiness, unusual sleepiness, or difficulty awakening
- ◆ Uncontrollable shaking, jerking or convulsions (seizures)
- ◆ Blood or clear fluid coming from the ears or nose
- ◆ Slurred or garbled speech, or any other changes in speaking
- ◆ Slowing heart rate
- ◆ Ringing in the ears
- ◆ Stiff neck
- ◆ Blurred or double vision, one pupil larger than the other, abnormal eye movements or shaking eyes
- ◆ Increasing or persistent confusion or problems with memory (like difficulty remembering recent events or important facts)
- ◆ Unusual sensations like tingling or numbness of the arms, hands or fingers
- ◆ Behavior changes (irritability, restlessness, crying, excessive laughter, obnoxious behavior, moodiness)
- ◆ Clumsiness, weakness or loss of strength in arms or legs (on either or both sides), difficulty walking, dizziness, staggering, poor balance or unsteadiness
- ◆ If you have any worsening of symptoms, if you are not improved within about 24 hours, or have any other signs or symptoms that concern you

Follow these “DO’s” and “DON’T’s”

DO:

- ◆ It is important that you are not alone and a responsible family member or friend is with you for the next 24 to 72 hours, or longer until you are feeling back to normal. Give him/her this sheet and your doctor's name and phone number. Have them wake you every 2 to 3 hours the first 24 hours.
- ◆ Many people with concussions have nausea, so eat a light diet for the first 24 to 48 hours. A heavy diet may lead to vomiting. Begin with clear liquids and advance to solids as tolerated.
- ◆ Return to activity only after your doctor has given you full medical clearance *in writing*. Give a copy of this written clearance to your parents and coach/trainer.

DON'T:

- ◆ Don't take any medicines or substances that cause drowsiness or changes in levels of consciousness including narcotic pain medicines, alcohol, sleeping pills, muscle relaxants, antihistamines (allergy pills), tranquilizers or recreational drugs.
- ◆ Don't take any medications without first calling the doctor. Do **NOT** take aspirin or other anti-inflammatory medicines like ibuprofen for the first 24 hours as they may make bleeding worse. If you did not lose consciousness and have only a mild headache, you may take Tylenol[®] (acetaminophen).
- ◆ Don't take medicines such as stimulants or decongestants because they may aggravate irritability.
- ◆ Don't drive. Don't do any sports (including swimming and hunting). Don't take a tub bath. Don't operate dangerous or heavy machinery.
- ◆ Don't do strenuous activities until cleared by your doctor. This may result in a more severe headache.
- ◆ Don't do activities that may result in another concussion.
- ◆ Limit physical activity for 24 hours. No school for students, no work for adults.

If Someone Loses Consciousness or Has a Seizure:

1. Instruct someone to call 911 or your emergency number immediately to get help.
2. If they are standing, try to prevent or break the fall.
3. Turn the person onto one side.
4. Loosen any tight clothing around the neck. If there is the possibility of a head or neck injury and if the airway is clear, do not remove the headgear – leave that to the emergency personnel.
5. Remove any object in the immediate area that could cause injury (such as hard or sharp objects).
6. Do not put anything in the person's mouth, including your fingers.
7. Let the person lie on one side until the seizure is over. Explain what happened to them and where he or she is.
8. The person may be groggy and confused afterwards if he/she regains consciousness. Stay with the person and instruct them to lie still until help arrives.

For More Information: Brain Injury Association, www.biausa.org

EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS:

Parents/Guardian: _____

Doctor: _____

Emergency Medical: _____

Coach: _____

This handout is adapted from the book "*Championship Nutrition and Performance: The Wrestler's Guide to Lifestyle, Diet and Healthy Weight Control*" by Nicholas Rizzo, M.D. This handout should not be considered complete nor a substitute for evaluation and treatment by a physician. Always consult your doctor first.