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CARE OF YOUR HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION

General Information

A mild head injury also known as a concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans or MRIs. It is caused by striking the head against an object or by a blow to the head. It affects the way a person may think and remember things for a short time, and can cause a variety of symptoms. You do not need to be knocked out to have had a concussion.

While most people recover quickly you may experience some of the following symptoms over the next few days and weeks:

- Headaches/ Feelings of dizziness
- Nausea / Sensitivity to light or noise
- Sexual difficulties
- Sleep disturbances
- Memory problems / Difficulties with concentration
- Feeling depressed, tearful or anxious
- Irritability

The signs and symptoms of a concussion often last for 7-10 days but may last much longer. In some cases, an individual may take many weeks or months to heal. Having had previous concussions may increase the chance that a person may take longer to heal.

How is a concussion treated?

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS ARE MADE WORSE BY EXERTION, BOTH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL. THE MOST IMPORTANT TREATMENT FOR A CONCUSSION IS REST.

Instructions

1. Do not stay home alone for at least 6 hours after time of injury.
2. Refrain from exercise or do any activities that make you feel worse. (i.e. driving, reading, working on the computer, video games, shoveling snow, moving heavy objects etc.)
3. If nauseated, follow a clear liquid diet for 12 to 24 hours.
4. Do not drink any alcoholic beverages, nor do marijuana or other recreational drugs until symptoms subside.
5. You may take acetaminophen for pain or Gravol (Dimenhydrinate) for nausea.
6. Do not take ASA (Aspirin) or Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) for 24 hours.

7. If you normally take other medications, ask your physician if you should continue to take them during your recovery from your injury.
8. Make sure you stay within reach of a telephone and medical help during the next few days.

The physician who examined you did not find any serious brain or skull injuries during the examination but it is possible for more serious symptoms to develop later on.

Return Immediately to a Doctor if you have worsening of symptoms like:

1. Being more confused
2. Headache that is getting worse
3. Vomiting more than twice
4. Difficulty waking up
5. Difficulty walking
6. Having a seizure
7. Strange Behaviour

When Can I Return To Sport

It is important not to go back to sports if you have any concussion symptoms or signs. Return to sport and activity must follow a step-wise approach.

Note: EACH STEP MUST TAKE A MINIMUM OF ONE DAY.

Step 1) No activity, complete rest. Once back to normal and cleared by a doctor go to step 2.

Step 2) Light exercise such as walking or stationary cycling, for 10-15 minutes.

Step 3) Sport specific aerobic activity (i.e. skating in hockey, running in soccer), for 20-30 minutes. NO CONTACT.

Step 4) "On field" practice such as ball drills, shooting drills, and other activities with NO CONTACT (ie. No checking, no heading the ball, etc.).

Step 5) "On field" practice with body contact, once cleared by a doctor.

Step 6) Game play.

If you have any symptoms of a concussion (e.g. headache, feeling sick to the stomach) that come back either with activity, or later that day, stop the activity immediately and rest until symptoms resolve, for a minimum of 24 hours. Then resume activity from the previous step.

YOU SHOULD NOT GO BACK TO SPORT UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN CLEARED TO DO SO BY A DOCTOR.

More Information available at:

www.thinkfirst.ca

www.headway.org.ca