Head Injury/Concussion

You have been diagnosed with a concussion. This handout is designed to help you recover safely and prevent further injury. If your symptoms worsen in the first 24 hours after the injury, you may need to seek urgent medical care, so stay with a reliable friend or relative during that time period.

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that alters your brain function. It is common to experience physical symptoms (like headaches, dizziness, fatigue), cognitive symptoms (like difficulty concentrating/focusing, memory deficits), emotional symptoms, and sleep disturbances. Most concussions resolve in 7-10 days. CT scans and MRIs are not necessary to diagnose and treat a concussion.

Warning Signs

If your injury is worsening in any way, including:

- Inability to wake up
- Severe/worsening headache
- Confusion
- Worsening balance problems
- Seizures (convulsions)
- Changes in vision or double vision
- Problems talking or slurred speech
- Repeated vomiting (at least 2 episodes)
- Stiff neck (cannot bend chin to chest)
- Weakness or numbness in any part of the body
- Changes in personality/behavior

... You should seek emergency medical care.

Home Care Recommendations

- Record your symptoms daily on the attached "symptom scale" form to monitor your progress.
- Rest your brain: Avoid any activity which increases symptoms. You may need to modify school/work attendance and workload. You may need to avoid texting, videogames, and computer or television usage. Whatever increases symptoms should be avoided.
  - If you have trouble with coursework accommodations, call Social Services at Tang (510-642-6074) for advice.
- Rest your body: Avoid any exertion which increases symptoms. Resume normal activities of daily living as tolerated. Avoid pulling "all-nighters" as sleep will help recovery. Take naps or rest breaks when you feel tired or fatigued.
- Only take medication as recommended by your clinician. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is the preferred medicine for pain after the injury. Avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen unless recommended by your clinician.
- Avoid drinking alcohol or taking illicit drugs, sleeping pills, or other substances that change your thinking and/or might worsen your symptoms.

Check our website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this medical concern or others.
For an appointment www.uhs.berkeley.edu or call 510-642-2000 For advice, call Clinic Nurse 510-643-7197
Return to Sports/Activity
The injured person should never return to sports or active recreation with any persisting symptoms of a concussion. The key to recovery is to rest (physically and mentally) and to avoid activities that might cause another head injury. Athletes should not return to playing sports until cleared by a clinician. When all symptoms have resolved at rest, follow a stepwise, symptom-limited program to return to sports activity (see progressive stages 1-6 below and discuss with your doctor). There should be approximately 24 hours (or longer) for each stage. If symptoms recur at any stage, the athlete should return to stage 1. Medical clearance should be given before return to playing sports (#6)

Stages 1 through 6:
1. Rest (physically and mentally) until all symptoms have resolved
2. Light exercise (e.g. stationary bike, brisk walking)
3. Sport-specific exercise
4. Non-contact training drills (start light-resistance training)
5. Full-contact training after medical clearance
6. Return to competition (game play)

Post–Concussion Syndrome
Sometimes after even a minor head injury, people notice persisting symptoms of a concussion (some examples are listed below). Talk to your doctor if these symptoms are worsening, or if they persist more than 7-10 days.

- Difficulty concentrating; feeling mentally foggy
- Difficulty learning and memory problems
- Vision changes
- Headaches, especially with stress or physical activity
- Mood changes (irritability, sadness, nervousness, more emotional)
- Increased sensitivity to noise or light
- Dizziness, balance problems, or nausea
- Unusual fatigue; feeling tired; drowsiness or change in sleep patterns
- Difficulty in relationships with other people
- Increased susceptibility to alcohol (becoming drunk more easily)
Head Injury/Concussion

Head Injury Checklist
Answer Sheet

Instructions: Each day, grade the 20 symptoms listed with a score of 0 through 6. Add the total at the bottom to create your total score for that day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPTOM</th>
<th>RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TODAY’S DATE

Headache
Confusion/disorientation
Difficulty remembering incident
Nausea
Vomiting
Dizziness
Balance problems
Fatigue
Trouble falling asleep
Sleeping more than usual
Drowsiness
Sensitivity to light/noise
Irritability
Sadness
Nervousness
Numbness or tingling
Feeling slowed down
Feeling like “in a fog”
Difficulty concentrating
Difficulty with memory

TOTAL SCORE

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