



International Cheer Union (ICU)

Head Injury Fact Sheet and Position Statement

Revised May 2015

A concussion (commonly called a head injury) is a potentially serious brain injury that disrupts normal brain function. It may be caused by a blow to the head or any activity that transmits forces to the head, such as a whiplash-type injury. A concussion cannot currently be diagnosed or ruled out by a standard CT scan or MRI.

Signs & Symptoms of Concussion

Symptoms do not always present immediately after the concussive event and may change over time.

Any one or more of the following signs and symptoms may indicate a head injury has occurred:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance Problems
- Dizziness
- Blurred Vision
- Sensitivity to visual and auditory stimuli, such as bright lights or loud noise
- Feeling “sluggish” or “foggy”
- Altered sleep patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Problems with memory

Some signs that may be observed by coaches, other team members, practice and competition staff/venue staff, or any member of the athlete’s entourage group (e.g. medical personnel, team managers, etc.) following a concussive event:

- Disoriented or confused appearance, such as:
 - Being unsure of surroundings
 - Uncharacteristic decrease in performance
- Loss of coordination
- Any loss of consciousness. Note: Most concussions do not include loss of consciousness
- Personality or behavior changes (irritable, agitated, sad, etc.)
- Unable to recall events immediately before or after the concussive event.
- Athlete does not seem to be like themselves

The International Cheer Union (ICU) recommends immediate removal of any individual from practice, training / skill educational activities, or competition following a suspected head injury. Head injuries include, but are not limited to concussions, second impact syndrome and traumatic brain injuries.

Any athlete who exhibits signs of symptoms consistent with concussion should be removed from the activity at that time and should not be allowed to return to activity that day. The athlete should not return to activity on a subsequent day until evaluated by and receives clearance for such participation from a qualified physician (MD or DO specifically trained in concussion management).

Coaches should make all reasonable efforts to notify parents and/or guardians upon witnessing or report of accident. NOTE: If the athlete’s parent(s) and/or guardian(s) deny evaluation by a qualified physician (MD or DO specifically trained in concussion management), the athlete should not be allowed to return to activity.

This information is not intended to evaluate or treat a concussion or any injury, and is not a substitute for a consultation with a medical provider. Every concussion / head injury is unique and the International Cheer Union (ICU) recommends that you seek a physician following any injury, especially a head injury. In addition to these recommendations, laws can differ in any local area around the world (e.g. within provinces / states within a respective country- as well as within different countries) and may be more restrictive in nature. Local laws should be followed wherever applicable.