Head Injuries - Take Home Sheet

The term "head injury" refers to any injury that results from being hit on the head or a mechanism which causes the brain to be jarred. Typically, there are cuts, scrapes or bruises on the face or scalp and often there is a mild headache that gets better over one to two days. More serious head injuries can also shake the brain, resulting in a momentary loss of consciousness, confusion or amnesia. This is called a concussion. Often head injuries result from motor vehicle accidents, falls or fights.

What are the risks?

Most minor head injuries (including mild concussions) get better over several days and do not produce any serious medical problems. There are, however, some risks:

1. If there are any cuts or scrapes, they may become infected.
2. Sometimes there is serious damage to the face, eyes, ears, jaw or teeth.
3. A serious head injury can injure the brain, resulting in permanent brain damage or even death.

A serious head injury usually produces warning signs right away. On rare occasions, however, the warning signs may not appear for several hours or even days. For this reason it is important to seek medical attention if any of these warning signs appear:

1. Unconsciousness (pass out, black out)
2. Unusual drowsiness
3. Confusion
4. A severe headache
5. Vomiting
6. Blurred Vision
7. Convulsions (seizures, fits)
8. A stiff neck
9. Areas of numbness, tingling or weakness
10. Stumbling or loss of balance
11. Unequal size of the pupil(s)

Instructions:

1. If you are not allergic, acetaminophen (Tylenol) will help ease the pain.
2. Seek immediate medical attention if you develop any of the warning signs listed above.
3. Unless instructed otherwise, for the next 24 hours, you should:
    a. stay with a friend, roommate or family member who has read this sheet.
    b. have someone check on the with the injured athlete every 4 hours to make sure you have not developed any of the warning signs listed above.