



CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Parent/Guardian and Swimmers,

This information sheet is provided to assist you and your child in recognizing the signs and symptoms of a concussion. Every swimmer is different and responds to a brain injury differently, so seek medical attention if you suspect your child has a concussion. Once a concussion occurs, it is very important your swimmer return to normal activities slowly, so he/she does not do more damage to his/her brain.

What is a Concussion?

A concussion is an injury to the brain that may be caused by a blow, bump, or jolt to the head. Concussions may also happen after a fall or hit that jars the brain. A blow elsewhere on the body can cause a concussion even if a swimmer does not hit his/her head directly. Concussions can range from mild to severe.

Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion

Swimmers do not have to be “knocked out” to have a concussion. In fact, less than 1 out of 10 concussions result in loss of consciousness. Concussion symptoms can develop right away or up to 48 hours after the injury. Ignoring any signs or symptoms of a concussion puts your child’s health at risk!

Signs Observed by Coaches, Officials, Parents or Guardians

- ☐ Appears dazed, stunned or confused
- ☐ Unsure about event, location or name of meet
- ☐ Moves clumsily
- ☐ Answers questions slowly
- ☐ Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- ☐ Shows behavior or personality changes – irritability, sadness, nervousness, emotional
- ☐ Can’t recall events before or after incident

Symptoms Reported by Swimmer

- ☐ Any headache or “pressure” in head - how badly it hurts does not matter
- ☐ Nausea or vomiting
- ☐ Balance problems or dizziness
- ☐ Double or blurry vision
- ☐ Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- ☐ Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- ☐ Concentration or memory problems
- ☐ Confusion
- ☐ Does not “feel right”
- ☐ Trouble falling asleep
- ☐ Sleeping more or less than usual

Be Honest

Encourage your swimmer to be honest with you, his/her coach and your health care provider about his/her symptoms. Many young swimmers get caught up in the moment and/or feel pressured to return to sports before they are ready. It is better to miss practice or meets than the entire season... or risk permanent damage!

Seek Medical Attention Right Away

Seeking medical attention on the day of the event is an important first step if you suspect or are told your swimmer has a concussion. A qualified health care professional will be able to determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports and other daily activities:

- ☐ No swimmer should return to activity on the same day he/she gets a concussion
- ☐ No swimmer may return to training, regardless of sport, until he/she is cleared by a health care professional with a note specifying clearance. Swimmers should NEVER return to the pool if they still have ANY symptoms... in case a swimmer returns with a note and then during the practice complains of a headache or other symptoms
- ☐ Parents and coaches should never pressure any swimmer to return to swim

The Dangers of Returning Too Soon

Returning to the pool too early may cause Second Impact Syndrome (SIS) or Post-Concussion Syndrome (PCS). SIS occurs when a second blow to the head happens before a swimmer has completely recovered from a concussion. This second impact causes the brain to swell, possibly resulting in brain damage, paralysis, and even death. PCS can occur after a second impact. PCS can result in permanent, long-term concussion symptoms. The risk of SIS and PCS is the reason why no swimmer should be allowed to participate in any physical activity before they are cleared by a qualified health care professional.

Recovery

A concussion can affect school, work, and sports. Along with coaches and teachers, the school nurse, athletic trainer, employer, and other school administrators should be aware of the swimmer's injury and their roles in helping the child recover. During the recovery time after a concussion, physical and mental rest is required. A concussion upsets the way the brain normally works and causes it to work longer and harder to complete even simple tasks. Activities that require concentration and focus may make symptoms worse and cause the brain to heal slower. Studies show that children's brains take several weeks to heal following a concussion.

Returning to Daily Activities

1. Be sure your child gets plenty of rest and enough sleep at night – no late nights. Keep the same bedtime weekdays and weekends.
2. Encourage daytime naps or rest breaks when your child feels tired or worn-out.
3. Limit your child's activities that require a lot of thinking or concentration (including social activities, homework, video games, texting, computer, driving, job-related activities, movies, parties). These activities can slow the brain's recovery.
4. Limit your child's physical activity, especially those activities where another injury or blow to the head may occur.
5. Have your qualified health care professional check your child's symptoms at different times to help guide recovery.

Returning to School

1. Your swimmer may need to initially return to school on a limited basis, for example for only half- days, at first. This should be done under the supervision of a qualified health care professional.
2. Inform teacher(s), school counselor or administrator(s) about the injury and symptoms. School personnel should be instructed to watch for:
 - a. Increased problems paying attention.
 - b. Increased problems remembering or learning new information.
 - c. Longer time needed to complete tasks or assignments.
 - d. Greater irritability and decreased ability to cope with stress.
 - e. Symptoms worsen (headache, tiredness) when doing schoolwork.
3. Be sure your child takes multiple breaks during study time and watch for worsening of symptoms.
4. If your child is still having concussion symptoms, he/she may need extra help with school-related activities. As the symptoms decrease during recovery, the extra help can be removed gradually.

Returning to the Pool

1. Returning to the pool is specific for each person. As an example, California law requires written permission from a health care provider before a swimmer can return to play. Follow instructions and guidance provided by a health care professional. It is important that you, your child and your child's coach follow these instructions carefully.
2. Your child should NEVER be on deck, practice, or participate in competition if he/she still has ANY symptoms. (Be sure that your child does not have any symptoms at rest and while doing any physical activity and/or activities that require a lot of thinking or concentration).
3. Be sure that the athletic trainer, coach and physical education teacher are aware of your child's injury and symptoms.
4. Your swimmer should complete a step-by-step exercise-based progression, under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Concussion Information Sheet

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code §124235, a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be given by each youth sports organization offering an athletic program to each swimmer in that program. The information sheet shall be signed and returned by the swimmer and, if the swimmer is 17 years of age or younger, shall also be signed by the swimmer's parent or guardian before the swimmer initiates practice or competition. The Irvine Swim League Concussion Information Sheet (three pages) is attached to this acknowledgment.

Please note, the information contained in the Swimming Concussion Information Sheet and this Acknowledgment is not medical advice and is no substitute for it.

I hereby acknowledge that I have received the ISL Swimming Concussion Information Sheet (three pages) from _____.

(Name of Irvine Swim League Team)

I have read and understand its contents.

I also acknowledge that if I have any questions regarding the signs or symptoms of a concussion or other head injuries, the need to seek medical attention and the protocol for returning to daily activities, school and the swimming pool, I will consult with a licensed health care provider.

_____ Swimmer's Name	_____ Swimmer's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Swimmer's Name	_____ Swimmer's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Swimmer's Name	_____ Swimmer's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Parent's or Guardian's Name	_____ Parent's or Guardian's Signature	_____ Date

This signed acknowledgment may be returned through an electronic medium, including but not limited to, fax or electronic mail. Please check with your Irvine Swim League Team representatives regarding contact information.