

Head, Neck, and Spinal Injuries

Head Injury

A head injury refers to any trauma or damage to the scalp, skull, brain, or other structures within the head caused by external forces such as a blow, fall, or accident. It can range from mild injuries, like cuts or bruises, to more severe ones, including concussions, skull fractures, or brain damage.

Signs and symptoms of a head injury:

- Confusion, disorientation, or memory loss
- Drowsiness or difficulty staying awake
- Slurred speech
- Severe or increasing headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Vision and ocular changes (e.g., double vision, dilated pupils, or unequal pupil size)
- Loss of balance and coordination
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

Treatment:

- If the person exhibits any of the above symptoms, immediately send him or her to the emergency room (ER) and minimize head and neck movement by applying a cervical collar.
- Take vital signs.
- Be prepared to start CPR if the person becomes unconscious.

Concussion:

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that can result from a blow to the head, neck, or body, causing the brain to move within the skull. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of a concussion is crucial for timely intervention. Individuals showing signs or symptoms of a concussion should be immediately removed from all physical activities, as well as from tasks that require concentration and visual stimulation, such as using a computer or texting. These activities should be limited to allow the brain to recover from cognitive stressors. The individual should not return to any activities until evaluated by a healthcare professional.

Physical Symptoms of Concussion:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Sensitivity to Light and Noise
- Blurred vision or double vision
- Ringing in the ears

Cognitive Symptoms of Concussion:

- Confusion
- Memory Problems
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Delayed Response to Questions

Emotional Symptoms of Concussion:

- Irritability
- Depression
- Anxiety

Sleep Disturbances Due to Concussion:

- Insomnia: Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Hypersomnia: Sleeping more than usual

Note: When a student sustains a head injury, the IC infirmary will contact the parents to monitor the student for 24 hours. If any of the symptoms mentioned above become apparent during this period, the parent should promptly take the student to the emergency room. While the 24-hour monitoring period is critical, extended observation may be necessary depending on the situation. Always consult healthcare professionals for advice on ongoing monitoring.

Neck Injury

A neck injury refers to any damage or trauma to the structures of the neck, including the muscles, ligaments, vertebrae, spinal cord, and nerves. Neck injuries can be caused by various factors, including accidents, falls, whiplash, or direct blows. They can range from mild strains to severe conditions that may result in spinal cord damage, paralysis, or even death.

Management of Neck Injury:

- **Immobilization:** If a neck injury is suspected, it is crucial to limit movement to prevent further damage. The person should be kept in a stable position with his or her head and neck supported. If available, a cervical collar should be used to help stabilize the neck.
- **Avoid Movement:** The individual should not be moved unless necessary (e.g., to avoid danger). Moving someone with a suspected neck injury can worsen the condition or cause further harm.
- **Monitor Breathing and Circulation:** Check the person's breathing and pulse. If the person is not breathing or has no pulse, begin CPR while maintaining neck stabilization. If trained, use the jaw-thrust maneuver to open the airway without moving the neck.

- **Seek Immediate Medical Attention:** Call for emergency medical help immediately. Professional evaluation is essential to assess the severity of the injury and determine the best course of action for treatment.

Spinal Injury

A spinal injury is any damage to the spinal cord or surrounding structures, such as the vertebrae, discs, or nerves, often caused by trauma like accidents or falls. It can lead to pain, loss of movement, or paralysis, depending on the severity and location of the injury.

Signs And Symptoms:

- Extreme back pain or pressure in the neck, head, or back
- Weakness, incoordination, or paralysis in any part of the body
- Numbness, tingling, or loss of sensation in hands, fingers, feet, or toes
- Loss of bladder or bowel control
- Difficulty with balance and walking
- Impaired breathing after injury

Treatment:

- If the person has any of the above, do not move them.
- Call for help.
- Put the collar neck to stabilize the neck.
- Use the Najo backboard with the fastrap restraints and the head immobilizer.
- Send the patient to the ER.