



## Checklist for Acute Examination of Head Injury

### History

- ☐ Previous history of head injuries, headaches, learning disabilities, or psychological disorders
- ☐ Mechanism of injury and activity at time of injury
- ☐ Chief complaint
- ☐ Unusual sensations (tinnitus, dizziness, blurred vision, headache, unsteadiness)
- ☐ Location, type, and quality of pain (including headache symptoms)
- ☐ Loss of consciousness
- ☐ Throughout history, examine memory and appropriateness and quality of verbal response.

### Observation

- ☐ Gait (unsteadiness, imbalance) if ambulated off-field
- ☐ Otorrhea, rhinorrhea, Battle's sign, raccoon eyes (skull fracture)
- ☐ Halo effect for cerebral spinal fluid
- ☐ Swelling, deformity, discoloration, or bleeding of skull, scalp, or face
- ☐ Bilateral symmetry of facial structures
- ☐ Unusual body posturing (decerebrate, decorticate)
- ☐ Unusual movement (vomiting, seizures, yawning, unilateral weakness)
- ☐ Unusual behavior (violent, combative, argumentative, repeating questions, confused, anxious)
- ☐ Unusual facial expressions (drooping of eyelid or corner of mouth)
- ☐ Level of consciousness (alertness, restlessness, lethargy)
- ☐ Pupil appearance (size, shape, equality)

- ☐ Pupil reaction to light (consensual and direct light reflex)
- ☐ Unusual eye movement (nystagmus, tracking difficulty, deviation from midline)
- ☐ Continue to observe vital signs (respiration depth, rate, and rhythm).

### Palpation

Bilaterally palpate for pain, tenderness, and deformity over the following:

- ☐ Skull and face
- ☐ Continue to monitor pulse rate.

### Neurological Tests

- ☐ Cranial nerve check
- ☐ Bilateral grip strength

### Special Tests

- ☐ Standardized self-report symptom checklist
- ☐ Neurocognitive assessment
- ☐ Standardized assessment of concussion (SAC)
- ☐ Balance and coordination assessment
  - ☐ BESS test
  - ☐ Heel-to-toe tandem gait test
  - ☐ Finger-to-nose coordination test

Repeat testing of the following every 15-30 minutes if stable, and every 5 minutes if unstable, until serious head injury is ruled out:

- ☐ Vital signs
- ☐ Pupils
- ☐ Level of consciousness

### Functional Tests

Performed only if athlete is otherwise symptom free under resting conditions.