



Concussion:

Guidance and Advice

Empowering Clubs, Elevating Coaches, Inspiring Gymnasts.

Modules:

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Guidance and Advice

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1.Introduction



Concussions are a serious concern in sports, affecting athletes across all levels of play. This document provides essential guidance on concussion management, aimed at safeguarding the health and well-being of participants. It outlines the key points necessary for understanding concussions, including how to identify the signs and symptoms, and how to handle them appropriately. By following these guidelines, coaches, athletes, and support staff can ensure a safer sporting environment and promote effective recovery for those affected.

2.Guidance and Advice



What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that results in the brain moving rapidly inside the skull. This sudden movement can cause the brain to twist or bounce, leading to chemical changes and damage to brain cells. Concussions can affect cognitive function, balance, and coordination, and symptoms may include headaches, confusion, dizziness, nausea, and memory problems. It's important to recognise that even mild concussions are serious and require proper management to prevent further injury and ensure full recovery.

If you suspect a child has a concussion

If a coach suspects a gymnast has a concussion, they should immediately remove the gymnast from the activity, ensure they are monitored closely, and seek medical evaluation. It's crucial to prioritise the athlete's health and not allow them to return to training until cleared by a healthcare professional.

All concussions should be managed on a case-by-case basis. Gymnasts should not return to competition until at least 21 days after the injury. If symptoms persist beyond 28 days, they should seek medical advice from their GP, which may lead to a specialist referral and review.

3. How to Identify a Concussion



Causes of Concussion

A concussion can result from a direct blow to the head or from impacts to other parts of the body that cause the head to move rapidly (e.g., whiplash injuries).

Everyone—gymnasts, coaches, parents/carers, officials, and spectators—has a responsibility to be vigilant for signs of concussion in gymnasts.

Visible Signs

Any of the following visible clues can indicate a concussion:

- Loss of consciousness or unresponsiveness
- Lying motionless on the ground or slow to get up
- Unsteady on feet, balance problems, or falling over
- Dazed, blank, or vacant look
- Confusion or lack of awareness of events
- Grabbing or clutching the head
- Seizures or convulsions following an impact

Signs After Injury

The presence of any of the following signs and symptoms may indicate a concussion:

- Disorientation (not aware of surroundings, such as other gymnasts or the apparatus)
- Headache
- Dizziness or feeling off-balance

- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Concerns expressed by a parent, carer, officials, or spectators about the gymnast

Signs Requiring Urgent Medical Attention

If any of the following symptoms appear in a gymnast suspected of having a concussion, urgent medical attention is necessary:

- Loss of consciousness due to the injury
- Worsening consciousness (increased drowsiness)
- Heightened confusion or irritability
- Uncharacteristic behaviour changes
- New neurological deficits such as:
 - Weakness
 - Double vision
 - Seizure or convulsion, including muscle twitching or being rigid/motionless due to muscle spasms
 - Severe or worsening headache
 - Persistent vomiting
 - Intense neck pain

4. Taking Action



How to Take Action

- Immediately remove the gymnast from the gymnastics activity and ensure they find a quiet place to sit down. It's crucial that they do not return to the activity, even if they claim their symptoms have subsided.

- Once removed from the activity, have the gymnast observed and assign a responsible adult to monitor them closely.
- If the gymnast is under 18 years old, inform their parent or carer about the potential concussion.
- Once the gymnast has been checked over by a medical professional if it is safe to do so arrange for safe transportation home for the gymnast.
- If required seek emergency medical assistance
- Ensure a responsible adult can supervise the gymnast over the next 24-48 hours.
- Complete any necessary injury report forms and ensure they are stored appropriately.
- Follow a gradual return to activity program.