



## **Procedure for Return to Participation in Swimming After an Injury/Illness**

Unfortunately, some athletes may sustain injuries during their sport season, or experience illness severe enough that they need to see their healthcare provider for evaluation and/or treatment. After such an occurrence, the athlete must be cleared from the doctor to participate in the sport. Determining the criteria for an injured athlete's return to practice/competition can be a confusing scenario when all the individuals involved are brought in. These may include the athlete, parents, guardians, coaches, family physician, the athletic trainer, and others. It must be understood that the primary responsibility is to cause no harm to the athlete, while enabling him or her to participate at the highest level possible.

If Coaches notice that a swimmer is not feeling well during practice or competition, the swimmer may be dismissed for the remainder of the practice or competition. A swimmer that has been dismissed from practice or completion because of illness or injury may require a note from a healthcare provider or specialist prior to returning to practice.

Coaches, official, and/or club or facility representatives are required to report all injuries that occur during practice or competition. All coaches must complete the USA Swimming Report of Occurrence online.

### **Back to practice Procedure**

- Get a note from your healthcare provider, or complete the attached form. It must be signed by a doctor, nurse practitioner or physician assistant – or, in some cases, a dentist, chiropractor or podiatrist may sign the note, but only if the injury/illness falls within their scope of practice. Please submit the note/form to your Coach.
- It must specify that you can return to swim and participate in the sport of swimming. If you can participate only on a limited basis, specific directions must be given. For example, “may do only upper-body activities”; “may return to swimming, but conditioning and drills only”; “may return to full participation, must wear left knee brace for all practices”; etc.
- Once you give the form to your Coach or the Head Coach, he/she will decide if you can return to swim or wait until you are fully recovered.
- This decision-making process is based on the different types of injuries that can potentially occur. The Coach or the Head coach may need to evaluate pool space, group practice level, liability etc. in order to reduce risk of re-injury and if possible, follow the doctor's note. A doctor's note doesn't allow you to participate in the activities unless you are cleared to participate in the sport of swimming including dry-land and weightlifting without restriction.

If an athlete returns to practice with restrictions, it is the responsibility of you and your coach to make sure you participate only within the limits ordered by your healthcare provider.

Coaches are not allowed to give injured athletes permission to return to sports until the swimmer(s) has been cleared through the Healthcare provider. Failure to follow this procedure may render the athlete ineligible for practice and competition.

### **Guidelines for Safe Return to Sports**

- You are pain-free. If it still hurts, don't use it and seek medical care.
- You have no swelling. Swelling is a sign of inflammation. If you still have swelling, rest.
- You have full range of motion. Compare the injured part with the uninjured side to see if you have regained range of motion.
- You have full or close to full (90 percent) strength. Again, compare with the uninjured side to see if strength has returned.
- For Lower Body injuries-you can perform full weight bearing on injured hips, knees, and ankles without limping. If you are limping, you are still not ready to return to sports. An altered gait can lead to further pain and problems.
- For upper body injuries - you can perform throwing movements with proper form and pain-free

Keep in mind that even when you feel 100 percent you may have deficits in strength, joint stability, flexibility or skill. Take extra care with the injured part for several weeks/months.

These are guidelines only; you should follow your physician's advice regarding return to sports.

Always remember that warm up should occur before any practice session or Competition. Gradually increasing heart rate and internal heat temperature will help increase range of motion and flexibility and reduce muscle tightness by stretching slowly and gradually. This will help avoid any possible injury and re-injury.

# Return to Sport Form for Injury/Illness

Calvert Aquatics Club, Head Coach Phone: (614) 425-9934

Email: [coachjohn@calvertaquaticsclub.org](mailto:coachjohn@calvertaquaticsclub.org)



**\*This form must be completed when an athlete is seen by ANY health-care provider or specialist.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify \_\_\_\_\_ (Athlete's Name/DOB)

Was seen in my office on (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Activity Level Allowed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other information regarding injury:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Dr. Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Dr. Phone Number)