

Head Injury in Children

Head injury in children is a common occurrence because children are very active and fall over frequently. Many head injuries are not serious and often cause a lump or a bruise to the head. It is important to know when to get your child seen by a doctor.



Seek medical advice immediately if your child:

- Has a hard hit to the head, especially if falling from a height or a car accident
- Has any loss of consciousness
- Is drowsy
- Vomits several times
- Has a wound or swelling to the head
- Is suffering from weakness or loss of power in limbs
- Has a persistent or worsening headache, despite taking pain medication
- Has had a fit
- Has any problems with their vision
- Has blood or clear fluid leaking from ear or nose

Concussion / Mild Traumatic Brain Injury

- Loss of consciousness
- Loss of memory for events before/after
- Any change in mental state (feeling dazed, disoriented, confused)
- Weakness, numbness, tingling

Always seek medical advice from a doctor if you think your child has sustained a concussion.



**Minor Head Injury - Signs and Symptoms:**

- No loss of consciousness
- Your child is alert and interacting you
- Nausea
- Mild headache/pain
- Mild dizziness

Minor head injuries can often cause swelling or bruising to the area. It may cause the child to become distressed at the time, but they generally recover fully. It is always a good idea to get your child checked by a doctor.

Treatment:

- Apply ice or cold compress to the injured area to help reduce the swelling
- If there is a cut, apply a clean dressing and press on it for about 5 minutes. Cuts to the head can bleed a lot
- Give Paracetamol every 4-6 hours for pain if needed
- Ensure they rest for the first 24-48 hours. This includes mental rest (no screens, books or school)
- Return to the doctor if their symptoms change or worsen in the first 48 hours, or if your child still has symptoms after
- 48 hours (could indicate a concussion)

Your child may feel sleepy afterwards after a hit to the head, especially if they have become upset. If they are due for a nap this is not a problem. Always return to the doctor if the symptoms worsen or cause you any concerns.

Long term problems:

If your child has sustained a concussion, you can expect recovery within 1-3 months. If your child has ongoing symptoms, it is recommended to see the doctor again.

