

# Head Injury in Children—Advice Sheet

Children often have bangs to the head and it can be difficult to tell if they are serious or not. Although most head injuries are not serious and simply result in a bump or bruise, occasionally head injuries require medical attention.

Please follow the advice below if your child has had a head injury and:

- Has been knocked out at any time
- Injured their neck or spine
- Has difficulty understanding what you are saying
- Is or has been confused or so sleepy that you cannot wake them properly
- Has weakness in their arms or legs or losing their balance
- Has had a convulsion or fit
- Becomes suddenly deaf
- Has clear fluid dripping out of their ear, nose or both
- Has blood coming from inside one or both ears
- Vomited more than once
- Bled a lot from their head
- Sign of invasive injury
- Visual problems such as blurred vision



You need urgent help. Please phone 999 or go straight to the nearest Emergency Department

- Fallen from a height greater than the child's own height
- Fallen more than a metre in height (3Ft)
- Fallen down stairs (from top to bottom poses more risk than bumping down the stairs)
- Had a persistent headache since the injury
- Has a blood clotting disorder
- Consumed alcohol
- Been very irritable or no concentration/interest in things
- If your child is under 1 year old
- You are concerned your child has been deliberately harmed



Take your child to the Emergency Department or seek immediate medical advice.

- Has not been knocked out
- Is alert and interacts with you
- Has not vomited (or a maximum of one vomit post injury)
- Has small bruising or minor cuts to the head
- Cried immediately but is otherwise normal



You can manage your child's injury at home using the advice overleaf.

Monitor your child closely over the next 2-3 days. If your child becomes unwell and shows any symptoms in the red or amber box follow the advice stated.

Some Symptoms are expected after a head injury and you shouldn't worry about them

For the next couple of hours your infant/child will probably be pale, quieter than normal and irritable. Over the next few days they may experience the following symptoms:

- Mild Headaches
- Feeling sick (without vomiting)
- Irritability/bad tempered
- Concentration problems
- Tiredness or problems sleeping
- Lack of appetite



If these symptoms do not go away in 1-2 weeks contact your G.P.

## **Do not leave your child alone for the first 48 hours following a head injury**

### **For Children over 1 year old:**

- Give paracetamol or ibuprofen if they are in pain (follow instructions on bottle)
- Encourage plenty of rest and avoid stressful situations
- Give light things to eat
- If area is bruised/swollen apply cold cloth for 20 minutes (repeating 4 hourly as requested)

- Do not let your child join in any vigorous games
- Older children should avoid contact sports for 3 weeks
- Do not send back to school until completely recovered
- Try to avoid medicine that will make your child sleepy (e.g. Piriton)

### **For Infants under one year old you should:**

- Try to give their usual feeds
- Make sure you can wake them as normal