



Head Injury

Head trauma is a common injury in childhood and most often results in only minor scalp injury. Because the scalp is so vascular, small cuts can bleed profusely and damaged blood vessels under the skin may swell causing an impressive “goose egg”.

We encourage you to call our office and discuss any head trauma with our medical staff as this is a brief overview of head trauma to assist in quick evaluation and home care.

If your child is alert and conscious, walking, talking, playing, and acting like she was before the fall, administer sympathy, love and comfort, apply an ice pack 15-20 minutes and monitor.

For more severe head injuries, here is what you do:

- **Stay calm.** It will help your child calm down.
- **Stop the bleeding.** The skin on the face and scalp is extremely vascular. Cuts bleed much more than other areas of the body. Apply gentle pressure to the cut until the bleeding stops.
- When the bleeding stops, examine the wound to decide if stitches may be needed. Usually any wound on the face requires closure as well as cuts over ¼ inch on the scalp.
- **Ice!** Gently hold an ice pack or bag of frozen veggies to the bump. This will help with swelling. Apply the pack for 15 to 20 minutes, take a break, and apply for 20 minutes more.
- **Pain medications.** Acetaminophen or ibuprofen may be offered 2 hours after the injury if there is no vomiting. If head pain is bad enough to require additional doses of medication, your child should be checked by a physician.
- **Observe your child for 24 hours.** Observe closely for 2 to 4 hours following the injury. Encourage your child to rest until symptoms (dizziness, nausea) have cleared. Allow sleep but keep your child close to monitor. Have your child sleep with you and awaken to evaluate walking and talking after the first two hours. The reason for a period of observation is because doctors often rely more on how the child behaves after the injury than what happened at the time of the injury. If the brain has been injured, signs may show immediately, or they may appear slowly during the next 24 hours.

Call the doctor if you notice the following symptoms:

- Any symptom that is getting worse, like headaches or nausea.
- Any vomiting,
- Changes in behavior, such as irritability or confusion.
- Dilated pupils (pupils that are bigger than normal) or pupils of different sizes.
- Vision that is blurred or doubled.
- Trouble walking or talking. Weakness or numbness in arms or legs.
- Loss of consciousness or any seizure activity.