

HEAD INJURY

Symptoms

- History of a blow to the head, such as scrapes, bruising, or swelling. Head injuries are very common when children are learning to walk, run, and climb. Most commonly toddlers strike their forehead.
- Bumps may appear large very quickly. The scalp has a large blood supply, therefore bumps appear large in size and cuts can bleed profusely.
- Pain at the site of injury is normal. A slight headache is also normal after a head injury.
- If your child has a change in vision, a loss of consciousness, confusion, change in pupil size, vomiting, or persistent headache and irritability, fluid from nose or ears, slurred speech, or unusually sleepy, a physician must evaluate them. Observe child for these findings for 5 days after injury.

Treatment

- *Observation* is your best tool for determining the extent of a head injury. Observe child for symptoms for 5 days. If any change in alertness, vomiting, persistent headache or irritability, change in ability to walk or move one side of his/her body differently than the other, or pupils are not equal in size, your child must be evaluated immediately.
- It is o.k. for your child to nap or sleep after an injury, if it is their usual nap time or bedtime. Awake them every 2 hours to be sure they are conscious and alert.
- You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain, as directed.