

Taking Care of Your Child

After Their Head's Been Hurt

Many children who hurt their heads get well and have no long-term problems. Some have problems that may not be noticed right away. You may see changes in your child over the next several months that concern you. The following are some common signs that your child may have a mild brain injury.



Health Problems

Headaches, including:

- Head, Face or Jaw Pain
- Headache That Keeps Coming Back

Balance Problems:

- Dizziness
- Falls, Trouble with Balance

Sensory Changes:

- Bothered By Smells, Lights or Sounds
- Changes In Taste, Smell or Appetite
- Ringing In Ears, Hearing Loss
- Feels Too Hot or Cold, Doesn't Feel Temperature At All
- Blurry or Double Vision

Immediate Medical Attention

Bring your child to the Emergency Room or call your child's doctor right away if your child experiences the following:

- Severe Headache That Gets Worse Or Does Not Go Away
- Seizures: Eyes Fluttering, Body Going Stiff, Staring Into Space
- Loss of Consciousness
- Sudden Onset of Weakness, Numbness
- Repeated Vomiting
- Will Not Stop Crying, Cannot Be Consoled, Will Not Nurse or Eat

Sleep Problems:

- Tiredness, Change In Sleep Patterns
- Mixing Days & Nights Up

Pain Problems:

- Frequent Neck & Shoulder Pain
- Other Unexplained Body Pain

Behavior And Feelings

Changes In Personality, Mood or Behavior:

- Sad or Anxious
- Irritable, Overreacts, Mood Swings
- Acts Differently Around Others, Wants To Be Alone
- Wants To Be Taken Care Of More Than Before
- Takes Risks Without Thinking First (Loss Of Common Sense)
- Slow To Respond
- Appetite Changes
- Changes In Sexual Behavior (Older Children)

Thinking Problems:

- Memory or Concentration Problems, Trouble Learning New Things
- Takes Things Too Literally, Doesn't Get Jokes
- Understands Words But Not Their Meaning
- Thinks About The Same Thing Repetitively
- Trouble Putting Things In Order (Desk, Room, Papers)
- Trouble Making Decisions
- Trouble Planning/Starting/Finishing A Task

Trouble Communicating:

- Trouble Staying On Topic And/Or Talks Too Much
- Trouble Thinking Of The Right Word
- Trouble Listening
- Does Not Say Things Clearly
- Trouble Reading At Previous Grade Level

Simple Steps You Can Follow To Take Care Of Your Child After A Concussion*

- Help your child get plenty of rest (including no late nights and no sleepovers).
- Avoid high-risk/physically demanding activities such as sports, riding a bike, "playing rough."
- Avoid mentally demanding activities such as sustained computer use and video games.
- Tell your child's school, babysitter, coach and others about the injury.
- Talk with your child's doctor about a plan to gradually increase your child's school and play activities.

What to do if your child has any of the problems on this list and they don't go away.

- Ask your child's doctor to have your child seen by a specialist in brain injury.
- Call the Brain Injury Association of Virginia for more information about brain injury and resources in Virginia: 1.800.444.6443.

** Adapted from Facts About Concussion and Brain Injury, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010.*



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