



Caregiver Bulletin

Head Injuries



Spot the Signs of Head Injuries

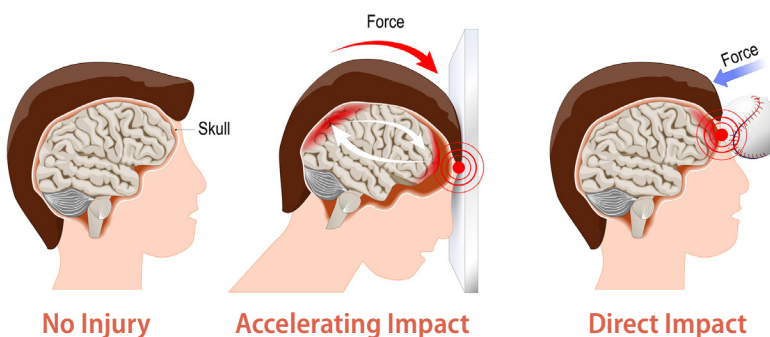
- An open scalp or skin wound, swelling or bruising
- Mild to moderate headache
- Blurry vision or double vision
- Dizziness or loss of balance
- Nausea or vomiting
- Ringing in the ears or neck pain
- Confusion, especially right after the injury
- Change in mood, such as feeling restless or irritable
- Trouble thinking, remembering or concentrating
- Drowsiness or decreased amount of energy
- Weakness, tingling in arms or legs
- Trouble sleeping
- Seizure

Did You Know?

Any injury to the skull, scalp or brain is a head injury. The effects range from mild bump or bruise to a traumatic brain injury.

Head injuries can result from:

- Accidental slips and falls.
- Being hit by a hard object or another person.
- Hitting one's own head with a fist, knee or against a wall.



The effects of head injury may not be noticeable right away. In fact, someone with a head injury may not know anything is wrong.

Children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) may have a harder time noticing or reporting that something doesn't feel right.



Be alert for changes in behavior.

Seek medical advice or immediate care if symptoms worsen.



Learn More

[Fall Prevention](#)

[Traumatic Brain Injury Facts](#)

[Head Injury Signs and Treatment in Children](#)

Treatment and Prevention

Mild Head Injury First Aid

Medical treatment may not be needed for mild injuries. For minor bumps and cuts:



- Use an ice pack to reduce swelling.
- Use first aid for small cuts and abrasions.
- Continue to look for changes in behavior or symptoms for at least 24 hours.

Contact the person's medical provider for advice and direction, especially if you aren't sure of the severity.

If you notice any new or worsening symptoms, get immediate medical care.

Moderate to Severe Head Injury

Call 911 right away if the person:



- Becomes very sleepy.
- Shows changes in speech and behavior.
- Develops a severe headache or stiff neck.
- Has a seizure.
- Has different sized or enlarged pupils (the dark central part of the eye).
- Is unable to move an arm or leg.
- Is knocked out (loses consciousness), even briefly.
- Vomits.



Tips for Seeing a Doctor

Be prepared to provide information about:

- The cause of injury.
- The person's typical behavior before the injury (this is called "baseline").
- Examples of changes in behavior after the injury.

Health care providers may want follow up visits to check on progress and look for new health problems.



Prevention

- Remove hazards in the home that may contribute to falls, such as clothing, shoes, electronics and toys lying on the floor.
- Secure rugs and loose electrical cords.
- Install grab bars and handrails in the bathroom and other areas with hard surfaces.
- Take extra care when getting into and out of a swimming pool or walking on slippery surfaces.