



## HEAD INJURY IN CHILDREN



THE ADELAIDE & MEATH  
HOSPITAL, DUBLIN  
INCORPORATING THE  
NATIONAL CHILDRENS  
HOSPITAL

Statement of Values  
Respect - Caring - Openness  
- Partnership - Teamwork

Fairness & Equality

### Patient Information Leaflet

#### Go back to your doctor or hospital immediately if your child has:

- Unusual or confused behaviour.
- Severe or persistent headache which is not relieved by Paracetamol – (Calpol/Paralink).
- Irritability in a baby.
- Frequent Vomiting.
- Bleeding or discharge from the nose or ear.
- A fit or convulsion, or spasm of the face, arms or legs.
- Difficulty in waking up.
- Difficulty in staying awake.
- New problems with vision (blurry or double vision) or pupils (black centre of the eye) are unequal in size.
- Slurred speech.
- If you are worried for any reason.

Contact The Children's Emergency Department on :

**01-4143558 or 01-4143559**

Developed by Joanne Fitzpatrick  
& Nurse Practice Development (May 2007)

#### Possible problems to watch out for in the next day or two.

**Headache:** Your child may have a headache, give paracetamol- (Calpol/ Paralink) every 4-6 hours as directed by your doctor. Follow instructions on the medicine bottle as well.

**Vomiting:** Your child may have vomited once but if vomiting continues, **go back to your doctor immediately.**

**Drowsiness:** Immediately after a head injury your child may be sleepy. There is no need to keep your child awake if he/she wants to sleep. However wake him/her every 30-60 minutes to check their condition and their reaction to familiar people and things.

**If you have difficulty waking your child, go to the nearest emergency department or call an ambulance**

## HEAD INJURY

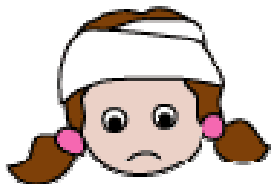
Head injuries are common in childhood and are usually not a serious problem. Most head injuries are caused by a blow to the head which may happen because of a fall, a car accident or a sports injury.

### Seek medical help immediately if:

- Your child has had a hard bang to the head, such as falling off some thing high or from a car accident.
- Your child losses consciousness.
- Your child seems unwell and vomits several times after a bang to the head.

### Signs and symptoms

The symptoms of head injuries are used to determine how serious it is. Head injuries can be classified into minor, moderate or severe.



### A minor head injury is when your child:

- Has not lost consciousness.
- Is alert or interacts with you.
- May have vomited, but only once.
- May have bruising or cuts on their head.
- Otherwise normal

### Your child should be watched closely for signs of more serious problems following a minor head injury.

### A moderate head injury is when your child:

- Has lost consciousness for less than 30 seconds.
- Is alert and responds to your voice.
- Has vomited two times or more.
- Has a headache.
- One brief fit may have happened straight after the injury.
- May have a large bruise, lump or cut in the head.

### Your child should be watched closely in hospital for at least 4 hours after a moderate head injury.

### A severe head injury is when your child:

- Has lost consciousness for more than 30 seconds.
- Is drowsy and does not respond to your voice.
- Has other significant head injury signs, such as unequal pupils, arm and leg weakness
- Has a second fit or convulsion. other than a single brief one when the injury happened.

### You should call an ambulance immediately if your child has a severe head injury.

