

HEAD INJURIES IN CHILDREN

From the spirited toddler to the athletic adolescent, blows to the head are the regular result of games and exploration. Fortunately, most of these blows cause no serious injury. The head is hit often; the brain is damaged rarely.

A blow on the head may release blood under the skin causing a large lump or, if the skin is cut, bleeding. If the child cries at once, picks himself up and behaves normally, the chances of severe injury are extremely small. An ice cube wrapped in a cloth may be applied to the lump. If there is bleeding, press firmly with a square of sterile gauze or clean cloth for a few minutes until the bleeding stops. Then gently wash with soap and water and inspect the wound. If the skin edges are together and gentle tugging across the wound does not pull the edges apart, no stitches are needed. Daily washing should be continued as the wound heals. Coverings are optional. If the wound gapes open, call our office for further help.

REASONS FOR SEEKING MEDICAL ATTENTION:

- Any loss of consciousness
- Any amnesia or loss of memory
- Persistent vomiting (3 or more times)
- Severe headache
- Changes in strength, coordination or sensation
- Any seizure
- Slurred speech
- Double vision or unequal pupils
- Excessive drowsiness, dizziness or confusion
- Wound which may need stitches

These do not necessarily mean that there is permanent damage, but that there has been at least temporary interference with brain function. Also see our handout about concussion.