

HEAD INJURIES

1. Scalp Injuries

Examples include cuts, scrapes, bruises, and bumps.

These are common in children, especially toddlers.

The scalp has a great blood supply. For this reason, minor injuries can cause large bumps (“goose eggs”), and small cuts can bleed a lot.

What to do:

Clean cuts and scrapes and apply pressure to decrease or stop bleeding.

If bleeding does not stop, or the cut is gaping, please seek medical care, preferably at a Pediatric urgent care or emergency room.

If wound is dirty, please make sure a tetanus shot has been received in the last 5 years.

Observe child closely for 2 hours after any head injury. If your child vomits more than once, has a change in behavior, or any new neurologic symptom, please call us for advice.

Tylenol may be given for comfort.

For large bumps, an ice pack may be applied for 20 minutes. This is sometimes impossible in a toddler. 😊

The most common scenario is a toddler who falls down a few stairs or off a chair. They usually cry a lot at the time, and ten minutes later they are running around and acting fine. If behavior is markedly different or if any of the symptoms listed on the next few pages are present, please call one of us afterhours.

2. Skull Fractures

Rare in children. Only 1-2% of head injuries in kids result in a fracture of the skull.

The most common symptom is a headache at the site of the injury. Sometimes you can feel the break in the bone. It can feel like bubble wrap when you touch it. This feeling is rarely there the first day.

Most skull fractures heal easily.

What to do:

Please seek medical care if you suspect a skull fracture in your child.

3. Concussions

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Concussions often (but not always!) occur during sporting events when a player hits his head on the ground, a piece of equipment, or a body of another player. Only 15-20 percent of concussions result in loss of consciousness, or passing out.

Following a severe hit to the head, if your child reports any of the following symptoms, he or she may have a concussion: appears dazed or confused, moves clumsily, answers questions slowly, has mood or behavior changes, has amnesia for event prior or after the fall, has a severe headache, nausea or vomiting ,complains of dizziness, balance issues, changes in vision or sensitivity to light or noise.

What to do:

If a concussion occurs during a sporting event, remove child from play immediately. A child with symptoms should not return to play. After the event, offer Tylenol and observe. "Resting" the brain will give it time to heal. Refrain from TV, computer, loud music, texting, or use of any screens. The child should be observed closely for the next 24 hours. Please wake your child at least once during the night to check for ability to arouse, orientation, and mental status. Do not send your child to school the next day and please seek medical advice before returning to normal activity.

4. Severe Brain Injury

Rare in children.

Symptoms include difficult to awaken from sleep, confusion, slurred speech, weakness in arms or legs, change in vision or crossing of the eyes, and unsteady walking

What to do:

Call 911 if you notice any of these symptoms in your child.