

Head Injury



Emergency Department

4480 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC V6H 3V4

604-875-2345 • 1-888-300-3088

www.bcchildrens.ca

Your child has injured his or her head.

Parents are best at noticing unusual behaviour in their child as they know their child best. We believe it is safe for your child to go home in your care but it is important to check your child carefully for the next 24 to 48 hours.

Allow your child to sleep if she wants to. Sleep is good for your child but:

Wake and check your child:

- every 2 hours for the first 8 hours,
- every 3 to 4 hours for the next 24 hours.

Make sure your child:

- can say his name.
- knows who you are.
- knows where she is.
- wakens as easily as usual.
- can hold your hand tight with both hands.
- has no blood or fluid in the ears or nose.

When your child is up, watch for any of these signs:

- loss of balance.
- loss of strength in an arm or leg - drops things, trips.
- can't see clearly such as having blurred or double vision.
- has any unusual movements or body jerks and twitches. These are also called convulsions.

If you see any of these signs, call 911 and **come back to the Emergency Department.**

Bring your child back to the Emergency if:

- vomiting is getting worse. Once or twice is common and expected.
- a headache gets worse, or does not get better even with pain medication.
- your child is restless, irritable or confused.
- your child can no longer do something he could do before the injury.

- your child has no energy or is sleepy, or does not wish to do anything.
- your child is different from her usual self.

Trust your gut feeling about your child. Some signs of a brain injury are behaviour changes that only someone who knows your child well might notice.

Caring for your child in the first 24 hours at home:

- You can give acetaminophen for headache. Tylenol is an example of one brand of acetaminophen. Do not give sedatives or stronger pain medicines. Stronger medicines may cover up some important signs of injury. If acetaminophen does not make the headache better, you must call your doctor.
- Your child may feel sick to her stomach for a day. It is best to give her small snacks and drinks rather than big meals.
- Keep your child where you can watch him. Until he is feeling well again, read or play quietly with your child. Don't allow rough games. Rest is important.

Things to watch for in the next few weeks or months:

Some injuries take longer to heal, or show their effect later. Go to see your family doctor if your child:

- acts different than normal.
- gets mixed up about who, where, when.
- forgets things.
- can't pay attention.
- drops things or trips a lot.
- seems clumsy.
- does not see or hear as well.
- has any speech problems.

Your doctor will help you decide whether the problems need attention.



604-875-2134 Emergency Department if you have questions.

It's good to ask!