

HEAD INJURIES

Home Care Instructions

-Emergent If: (call 911)

- Patient has a seizure or was knocked out for over 1 min
- Inability to move neck normally and began within 1hr of injury
- *If unconscious, do NOT move victim, unless danger of dying (i.e. drowning, car fire). IF person begins to vomit, roll person, like a log, onto side, keeping neck and back immobilized and in alignment. Cover with blanket to keep warm.
- Do not offer/allow food, water, medications
- Leave all penetrating objects in place
- Do not drive self to medical facility

-For Mild Head Injuries:

- Have a responsible adult stay with injured person for 24 hours
- Observe carefully for WARNING SIGNS for 72hrs
- Awaken every 2 hr for 1st 12hrs
 - Can person be easily aroused? Can they stay awake?
 - Assess Level of orientation (ask if they know date, where they are, and their name)
 - Does person talk/answer questions appropriately
- Allow person to sleep
- Clear fluids only for the 1st 2 hrs after injury

-Hematoma:

- For initial pain and swelling apply cold compress as tolerated for no longer than 10min. May repeat cold compress every 2 hrs for the 1st 24hrs (wrap compress in cloth/towel to protect skin)
- Warm compress may be used every 2hrs after 24hrs to promote healing by speeding blood re-absorption

-Laceration /Abrasion:

- If laceration needs to be sutured it should be done within 8hrs of injury
- Stop bleeding by applying constant direct, *gentle* pressure for 20min, with clean cloth.
- Wash wound with warm soapy water. Do not cleanse if wound is gaping open and may need stitches.
- May apply antibiotic cream, Bactrim or Neosporin (if not allergic)

- Apply loose dressing until scab forms then leave open to air. Change dressing daily if wound is draining.
- Assess for signs of infection. Notify Dr if laceration is not healed within 2 wks

-Medications:

- For fever/aches & pain/inflammation:
 - Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 325mg: 1-2 tabs every 4hrs as needed (do not exceed more than 4000mg in a 24hr period)
 - Motrin/Advil (Ibuprofen)200mg: 1-2 tabs every 6hrs as needed
- Do not offer/take any other medications, narcotics, or alcohol-based products, decongestants or cough medicine as they mask symptoms and may make it more difficult to determine if unusual behavior is result of medicine or head injury.

WARNING SIGNS:

When to Seek Medical Attention

- Altered mental state, behavior, slurred speech, staggering gait
- Amnesia
- Bleeding that cannot be stopped after 10 min of direct pressure
- Change in vision or blurred vision that last more than 5min
- Development of bilateral black eyes or blue behind ears
- Difficulty arousing person
- Injury causes at high speed or great height
- Large Swelling greater than 2in
- Neck pain
- Persistent Headache for 3days
- Skull has large dent
- Vomiting more than twice
- Weakness and/or numbness in extremities
- Water fluid dripping from nose or ears (not tears)
- Severe, persistent, increasing or intermittent symptoms
- Projectile vomiting
- Unequal pupils

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For Your Information:

-**A Concussion** is another sign of brain injury. A person who is knocked unconscious has, by definition, experienced a concussion. However, a mild concussion may occur with only confusion and loss of memory of recent events, without any documented loss of consciousness. After a concussion of any severity, a person is at greater risk for a subsequent, more serious brain injury following any sort of blow to the head. Therefore, a person with a concussion should always have a medical evaluation before resuming any work or recreational activities that might put them at risk for a second blow to the head

-Types of Head Injuries:

- Scalp Trauma: cut, scrape, bruise, or swelling
- Skull Trauma: Bruises, Fracture
- Brain Trauma: recognized by the presence of ACUTE NEUROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS: 1. difficult to awaken **OR** 2. Confused thinking and talking, **OR** 3. Slurred speech **OR** 4. Weakness of arms **OR** 5. Unsteady walking