NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.℠

Helping Hand™

Head Injury (Inpatient)

Your child has been in the hospital for a head injury and is now ready to go home. For his or her safety, there are several things you will need to do at home.

Signs To Watch For

You will need to return to the Emergency Department or call your medical provider if your child has any of these symptoms:

- Repeated or projectile vomiting
- A major change in behavior or personality (confused, impulsive, reckless, aggressive or abnormal behavior)
- Child is hard to wake up during the day or quickly falls back to sleep after waking
- Unable to awaken at night
- Complaints of headache that are not relieved with Tylenol®
- Bleeding or clear fluid from the nose or ears
- Hearing problems
- Convulsions (seizures)
- Staggering or swaying while walking
- Weakness or dizziness
- Eye changes (cross-eyed, droopy eyelids, trouble using eyes)
- Blurred or double vision
- Numbness or tingling in face, arms or legs
- Loss of consciousness (child does not wake up when you touch and talk to him)
- Your child does not "look right" to you or seems to be getting worse instead of better.

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Activity

The severity of the head injury determines when your child may return to contact sports or rough play. He may not return to sports, rough play or activities that require balance (bike riding, swimming, tree climbing, etc.) until his doctor says it is okay. He also should not operate any motor vehicles, including ATVs, motorcycles, motor scooters, snowmobiles, and cars, until the doctor says it is okay. A doctor experienced in treating head injuries should see your child. Your child should be symptom-free, then participate in a gradual return to exercise before resuming contact activities.

To help symptoms improve, and prevent symptoms from worsening, do not let your child watch TV, play video games, or spend time on the computer. Also, your child needs to avoid text messaging and listening to loud music or music through headphones. Encourage your child to rest and eat a light diet.

Preventing Future Injuries

- **Passenger safety:** Use proper child passenger restraints (car seat or booster seat) for age and size of child.
- **Sports safety:** Wear a proper fitting helmet and protective gear when using a bike, skateboard, scooter, roller-skates, etc.
- **Street safety:** Children should be taught to play where it is safe and supervised. Most children can be taught to safely cross the street alone at about 10 years of age.
- **Home safety:** Prevent falls, choking, poisoning, and burns. Check your home for possible dangers and use safety products (safety gates, cabinet locks, windows guards, smoke detectors, no walkers with wheels, etc.).

Regardless of the degree of head injury, it is important for your child to have medical follow-up.

- Tell the doctor if your child is having trouble doing things he or she was able to do before the head injury (including schoolwork).
- Tell your child's teacher that he or she has had a head injury.

If you need a doctor for your child, call the Nationwide Children's Hospital Referral and Information Line at (614) 722-KIDS.