



When Your Child's Head Has Been Hurt

Many children who hurt their heads get well and have no long-term problems. Some children have problems that may not be noticed right away. You may see changes in your child over the next several months that concern you. Below are some common signs that your child may have a mild brain injury. If your child has any of the problems on this list – **AND THEY DON'T GO AWAY** – see the "What to Do" box.

Headaches

Including:

- Headache that keeps coming back
- Pain in head muscle
- Pain in head bone (skull)
- Pain below the ear
- Pain in the jaw
- Pain in or around the eyes

Sensory Changes

- Bothered by smells
- Changes in taste or smell
- Appetite changes
- Ringing in the ears
- Hearing loss
- Bothered by noises
- Can't handle normal background noise
- Feels too hot
- Feels too cold
- Doesn't feel temperature at all
- Blurry vision
- Seeing double
- Hard to see clearly (hard to focus)
- Bothered by light

Sleep Problems

- Can't sleep through the night
- Sleeps too much
- Days and nights get mixed up

Pain Problems

Balance Problems

- Dizziness
- Trouble with balance

Behavior and Feelings

Changes in personality, mood or behavior:

- Is irritable, anxious, restless
- Gets upset or frustrated easily
- Overreacts, cries or laughs too easily
- Has mood swings
- Wants to be alone or away from people
- Is afraid of others, blames others
- Wants to be taken care of
- Does not know how to act with people
- Takes risks without thinking first
- Is sad, depressed
- Doesn't want to do anything, can't "get started"
- Is tired, drowsy
- Is slow to respond
- Trips, falls, drops things, is awkward
- Eats too little, eats all the time, or eats things that aren't food
- Has different sexual behavior (older children)
- Starts using or has a different reaction to alcohol or drugs
- Takes off clothes in public

Thinking Problems

- Has trouble remembering things
- Has trouble paying attention
- Reacts slowly
- Thinks slowly

Neck and shoulder pain that happens a lot

Other unexplained body pain

Takes things too literally, doesn't get jokes

Understands words but not their meaning

Thinks about the same thing over and over

Has trouble learning new things

Has trouble putting things in order (desk, room, papers)

Has trouble making decisions

Has trouble planning, starting, doing and finishing a task

Has trouble remembering to do things on time

Makes poor choices (loss of common sense)

Trouble Communicating

Changes the subject, has trouble staying on topic

Has trouble thinking of the right word

Has trouble listening

Has trouble paying attention, can't have long conversations

Does not say things clearly

Has trouble reading

Talks too much

WHAT TO DO:

If your child has any of the problems on this list, and they don't go away:

Ask your child's doctor to have your child seen by a specialist in head injury who can help your child learn skills (rehabilitation).

Ask your child's doctor to have your child seen by a Board-certified Neuropsychologist. This specialist can help you understand and deal with your child's behavior and feeling changes.

Call the Brain Injury Association of North Carolina for more information:

919-833-9634 – Raleigh headquarters

800-377-1464 – Toll-free line

k k k "V]UbVbYh

