

Head Injury in Children

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Head Injury

Head injury is one of the common causes of disability and death in the children. The injury can be as a mild bump, or cut on the head, or bruise (contusion), or it can be from moderate to severe in nature due to a concussion (an injury on head area that causes instant loss of alertness or awareness for a few minutes up to a few hours), deep cut or open wound, skull bone fracture (break in the skull bone), or internal bleeding and brain damage.

Skull bone fractures are of 4 types. They are

- Linear skull fractures
- Depressed skull fractures
- Diastatic skull fractures
- Basilar skull fracture

There are several causes of head injury in children. Common and major injuries are falls, accidents (Either the child is riding as a passenger in the vehicle or struck as a pedestrian), or a child abuse. The head injuries are seen mostly in adolescent population and frequently seen in males than in females.

Symptoms of mild head injury include:

- Swollen, a bump or a bruise in the area
- Superficial cut in the scalp
- Sensitivity to noise and light
- Headache
- Confusion
- Irritability
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Balancing issue
- Loss of memory or concentration
- Change in sleep patterns
- Blurred vision
- "Tired" eyes
- Ringing in the ears (tinnitus)
- Change in taste
- Fatigue
- Symptoms of moderate to severe head injury include
- Severe headache that does not go away
- Repeated vomiting
- Nausea
- Loss of consciousness
- Short term memory loss
- Speech disability

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- Difficulty while walking
- Weakness
- Sweating
- Pale in colour
- Seizures
- Changes in behaviour
- Blood draining from nose or ears
- One pupil
- Deep cut in the scalp
- Open wound in the head
- Foreign object penetrating the head
- Coma
- Vegetative state
- Locked-in syndrome

Head injury can be diagnosed by the following tests

- Blood tests
- X-ray
- MRI (Magnetic resonance imaging)
- CAT scan (Computed tomography scan)
- EEG (Electroencephalogram)
- Treatment for head injury are based on the type of injury and severity
- Child age, health condition, and medical history
- Type of head injury
- Tolerance for specific medications, procedures, or therapies
- Extent of the head injury
- Course of expectation of the head injury
- Opinion (Family decision)
- Treatment depends on severity of injuries. It includes the following
- Rest
- Ice
- Ointment
- Adhesive bandage
- Topical antibiotic
- Observation
- Immediate medical attention
- Stitches
- Observation

Moderate sedation or assistance with breathing that would require being placed on a breathing machine, also called a mechanical ventilator or mechanical respirator

- Diagnostic tests
- Surgery

Prevent the injuries from occurring and promote a safe playing environment to children. A child suffering with severe brain injury affects speech, vision, hearing, or taste function, muscle function depending on the brain damage area. Long-term or short-term injury may changes in the behavior or in personality. These children require lifelong medical and rehabilitative (physical, occupational, or speech therapy) management.

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