

## **Head Trauma in Children**

Head trauma is a common childhood accident. Fortunately, most head trauma in children, though understandably alarming to their parents, does not result in significant injury. A blow to the head usually causes swelling and bruising. Indeed, "goose-eggs" arise almost instantly on the forehead and may result in bruising around the eyes (black-eyes) the next day. Following a blow to the head, ice or a cold compress should be applied for 15 to 30 minutes to minimize the swelling. (A frozen container from the freezer makes a handy compress.)

Anytime your child has been unconscious, you should contact us. If the head trauma has not resulted in unconsciousness, it is usually safe to observe children at home. It is best to allow them to continue their usual activities (eating, playing and sleeping) so that a change from their normal behavior can be recognized. During the first twelve hours following head trauma, children should be awakened every two hours to make sure they are arousable.

Listed below are other signs and symptoms which might suggest significant head injury. Contact us if you note any of these during the 24 hour period following the head trauma.

1. Change in level of consciousness or awareness (confused, disoriented, drunk, or bizarre behavior).
2. Inability to arouse from sleep.
3. Uncoordinated or stumbling gait.
4. Incoherent or garbled speech.
5. Loss of vision or double vision.
6. Loss of hearing or fluid flowing from ear.
7. Repetitive vomiting.
8. Weakness or paralysis of arms or legs.