

## Do you know when to get help for a Head Injury?



A head injury is a trauma to the head or brain. Head injury can occur when a person strikes their head on the ground or another hard object. The most common causes of serious head injuries in adults are caused by car accidents, falls, or being hurt by someone else. Children may also experience head injury as a result of falling off their bikes, roller skates, trampolines, or during other play and sporting activities. Sometimes it is hard to know when to seek medical care after a head injury. In general if the person experiences any of the following after hitting their head a doctor should be contacted:

- Vomiting
- Difficulty concentrating or understanding
- Drowsiness or overly tired
- Having difficulty walking
- Weakness
- “Seeing stars”
- Headache
- Irritability
- Difficulty tolerating bright lights or loud sounds
- Blurred vision or difficulty seeing

If a person has a severe head injury, the ambulance should be called. A serious head injury can occur if the person falls from a distance of one-half their height or they fall and strike their head on a hard surface. Encourage the person to stay still and prevent movement until the ambulance arrives. The symptoms for a severe head injury may include:

- Loss of consciousness (blacking out)
- Neck pain and severe headache
- Abnormal breathing
- Seizures
- Obvious wound or bleeding
- Bleeding or clear fluid coming from the nose, ears, or mouth
- Loss of bladder or bowel control
- Loss of sensation to any part of the body

Prevention of head injuries is the key. Prevention measures include wearing helmets when bike riding, skating, and driving or riding on motorcycles. Wear appropriate protective gear when playing sports. Wear your seatbelts and use approved car seats for children. Never drink and drive. Take a moment to ‘fall proof’ your home. Places where most falls

occur are the stairs, bathtub, tripping over throw rugs and furniture. Make sure there is enough light to see by, remove slippery throw rugs or secure them down. Make sure electrical cords are not crossing pathways and go slowly when getting in and out of the tub.

Identifying whether or not a head injury is serious can be difficult.  
Consulting with a physician is always the best bet.