

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. This card lists some of the common signs that your child may have a mild brain injury. We have only listed the problems we see most often when a child's brain is hurt. Not every problem that could happen is on this list. If your child has any of the problems on this list — **AND THEY DON'T GO AWAY** — see the "What to Do" box on the back of this sheet.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

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

Balance Problems

- dizziness
- trouble with balance

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



These problems don't happen often. If your child has any of them, see your doctor right away.

- ▲ severe headache that does not go away or get better
- ▲ seizures: eyes fluttering, body going stiff, staring into space
- ▲ child forgets everything, amnesia
- ▲ hands shake, tremors, muscles get weak, loss of muscle tone
- ▲ nausea or vomiting that returns

Sleep Problems

- can't sleep through the night
- sleeps too much
- days and nights get mixed up

Pain Problems

- neck and shoulder pain that happens a lot
- other unexplained body pain



Continued on Back

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
- 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

Arizona Governor's Council on Spinal & Head Injuries

**Brain Injury
Association
of Pennsylvania, Inc.**

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

 **pennsylvania**
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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).

- Contact the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania for more information:

www.biapa.org

Brain Injury Resource Line: (866) 635-7097

- For school-related concerns contact:

Brenda Eagan Brown, M.S.Ed.
School Re-Entry Program Coordinator

eaganbrown@biapa.org

(724) 944-6542

Brain STEPS



**Brain Injury
School Re-Entry Program**

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