

Head Injury - Advice for Parents and Carers

This leaflet is to help to advise on how best to care for a child who has a bump / injury to the head.

Head wounds rarely need stitches and can normally be glued by a health professional. This can be done in Minor Injury Units or Urgent Treatment Centres and some GP practices offer a minor injuries service. To find a local service see overleaf.

Please use the "Caring for your child at home" advice section (see overleaf) and the traffic light advice below to help you. Most children can be managed according to the green guidance below especially if they are alert and interacting with you. It is important to watch the child for the next 2-3 days to ensure that they are responding to you as usual.

Traffic light advice:

Green: Low Risk

If your child:

- Cried immediately (after head injury) but returns to their normal behaviour in a short time
- Is alert and interacts with you
- Has not been unconscious / "knocked out"
- Has minor bruising, swelling or cuts to their head

ACTION: If all the above have been met then **manage at home**. Follow the advice overleaf or, if you are concerned, contact your GP when they are open or call 111 when your GP surgery is not open

Amber: Intermediate Risk

If your child:

- Is under one year old
- Has vomited once or twice
- Has a continuous headache
- Has continued irritation or unusual behaviour
- Is under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Has been deliberately harmed and in need of medical attention

ACTION: Take your child to the nearest **Hospital Emergency department** if ANY of these features are present

Red: High Risk

If your child:

- Has been involved in a high speed road traffic accident or fallen from a height over 1 metre or been hit by a high speed object or involved in a diving accident
- Has been unconscious / "knocked out" at any time
- Is sleepy and you cannot wake them
- Has a convulsion or a fit
- Has neck pain
- Has difficulty speaking or understanding what you are saying
- Has weakness in their arms and legs or are losing their balance
- Cannot remember events around or before the accident
- Has had clear or bloody fluid dribbling from their nose, ears or both since the injury
- Has 3 or more separate bouts of vomiting

ACTION: Phone 999 for an ambulance if ANY of these symptoms are present