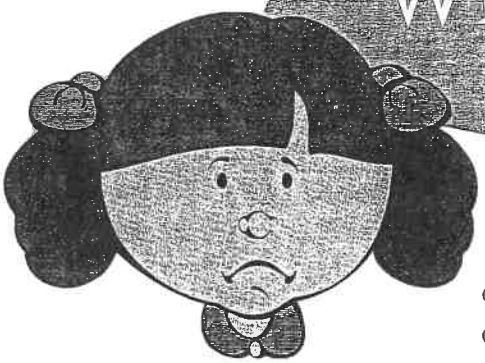
When Your Child's Head Has Been Hurt:



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. These changes can interfere with your child's ability to function successfully at school, at home, or at play. This flyer lists some common signs that your child may have a brain injury. 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 or around the eyes
- any other face or head pain

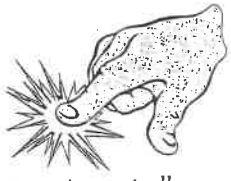
Balance Problems

- dizziness
- trouble with balance

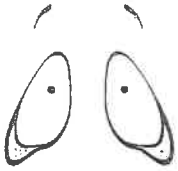
Sensory Changes

- 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
- ▲ hands shake, tremors, muscles get weak, loss of muscle tone
- ▲ repeated nausea or vomiting

Sleep Problems

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

Pain Problems

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

We have only listed the problems we see most often when a child's brain is injured. Not every problem that could happen is on this list.

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

THINKING and COMMUNICATING

- has trouble remembering things
- has trouble paying attention
- thinks or reacts slowly
- thinks about the same thing over and over
- has trouble learning new things
- takes things too literally, doesn't get jokes
- has trouble putting things in order (desk, room, papers)
- has trouble making decisions
- has trouble planning, starting, doing, and finishing tasks
- has trouble remembering to do things on time
- makes poor choices (loss of common sense)

- changes the subject, has trouble staying on topic
- has trouble thinking of the right word
- has trouble listening
- does not say things clearly
- has trouble reading
- talks too much

- is sad, depressed
- doesn't want to do anything, can't "get started"
- is slow to respond
- trips, falls, drops things, is awkward

- eats too little or eats all the time
- has different sexual behavior (older children)
- starts using alcohol or drugs
- has a different reaction to alcohol or drugs
- takes off clothes in public

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 recommend a specialist in brain injury, for:

- ▲ Evaluation of health problems by a pediatric physiatrist
- ▲ Evaluation of behavior, thinking and communicating by a licensed psychologist with a specialty in pediatric neuropsychology

Tell your child's teacher(s) and the school nurse about the brain injury. Ask them to observe your child throughout the school year for any changes in school performance or behavior. Check with the teacher(s) on a regular basis to see if changes are observed.

Contact the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey for information about brain injury and for specific resources for your child.

Brain Injury Association of New Jersey
1090 King George Post Road, Suite 708
Edison, NJ 08837

Main Number: 732-738-1002
Family Helpline: 1-800-669-4323
Website: www.bianj.org
Email Address: info@bianj.org

This flyer is made possible through the New Jersey TBI Demonstration Project Grant H21-MC-00027-01 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal Child and Health Bureau. The project is administered by the N.J. Department of Human Services, Division of Disability Services, and is implemented by the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HRSA
Health Resources and Services Administration
Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Arizona Governor's Council on Spinal & Head Injuries
Developed by the Arizona Governor's Council on Spinal & Head Injuries
in collaboration with the Arizona Department of Health Services.