

# Heads Up on Head Injuries



**Awareness** CLINICAL SERVICES AND PATIENT CARE PROGRAMS

HEAD INJURIES CAN CONSIST OF mild cuts, scrapes, bruises, bumps, lacerations – cuts that need stitches – and internal brain injury that may range from minimal swelling to severe bleeding.

## TREATMENT

- Mild injury:
  - Clean with mild soap and warm water and apply ice to bruised or swollen area
- Lacerations:
  - Clean with mild soap and warm water and rinse
  - Apply pressure to stop bleeding at site
  - Take the child to a doctor to have the cut evaluated for stitches if: edges of cut are separated; cut is longer than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch; and fat is protruding from the cut
- Severe injury – call 911 for:
  - Back or neck injury
  - Seizures
  - Persistent mental confusion or agitation
  - Loss of consciousness

## NORMAL SYMPTOMS

- Pale skin briefly after the injury
- Irritability (should improve with rest)
- Vomiting two to three times during the first hour after injury – if vomiting continues after first hour consult a doctor

## CONSULT DOCTOR FOR WARNING SIGNS

- Drowsiness or irritability that does not improve during the first hour of observation
- Vomiting more than three times or after one hour of observation
- Unsteady gait
- Double or blurred vision
- Persistent or worsening headache

If any symptoms occur later the following week and without new explanations consult your child's doctor.

*This general healthcare information should not be used as a substitute or in place of contacting your child's healthcare provider. If you need further assistance, call 404.250.kids to speak to a pediatric nurse. For more information check out our Web site at [www.choa.org](http://www.choa.org) and click on "medical library," "for professionals" or "for parents."*