

## **Head Injury: Care At Home**

Your child has been seen for a head injury. Most children with head injuries will get better quickly. The effects of a mild head injury may not be seen right away. Some children may act differently or have problems for only a few weeks. Sometimes these problems last longer.

### **What are the symptoms of head injury?**

**NOTE:** It is important to call your child's doctor if you see any of the following changes within the next 48 hours:

- **Excessive drowsiness or fussiness (in infants).** Your child may be sleepy and tired after a head injury. However, you should be able to wake your child as you would normally from a deep sleep. Your baby could also be a little more fussy than usual but should still be able to be comforted by you.
- **Vomiting that does not stop.** Sometimes a child may vomit one or two times after a head injury. However, the vomiting should not continue or start again later. Do **not** give your child anything to eat for about 2 hours after a head injury. After 2 hours, begin by giving your child sips of liquids such as water, soda, Kool-Aid® or Popsicles®. If there is no vomiting after these liquids, your child may try small amounts of regular foods. A child under one year of age can have Pedialyte®.
- **Unsteady balance or movement.** Watch your child sit, walk and move. Be sure that your child moves equally on the right side and the left side of their body.
- **Headache that gets worse.** Many children complain of a headache after a head injury. The headache should **not** get worse.
- **Confusion, disorientation.** Child does not know who or where they are, or other changes in behavior.
- **Seizures or convulsions.** If your child has a seizure, do not panic. Place your child on their side so they cannot fall and can breathe freely. **Call your child's doctor or go to the Emergency Department right away.**

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- **Has vision changes** such as double vision or difficulty focusing.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up should be provided by your health care professional.**