



HEAD INJURY INSTRUCTION SHEET

Signs of a more serious problem can appear in the 24 – 48 hour period after what appears to be a mild head injury. It is important to observe and take care of the injured person during this time period. Please carefully follow these instructions for the injured person:

1. Rest and avoid strenuous physical activity for at least 24 hours after the injury.
2. **DO NOT DRIVE OR OPERATE MACHINERY** for 24 hours after the injury.
3. Apply an ice pack or cold cloth to the head for 15 to 20 minutes at a time as needed for mild headache and/or for mild swelling or bruising at the injury site.
4. Tylenol® (acetaminophen) may be used for mild headache.
5. Eat and drink only a light diet for the next 24 hours. Mild nausea or one or two episodes of vomiting may occur; if so, use small frequent sips of clear liquids, such as flat soda, water or tea with sugar, Kool-Aid® or popsicles. If symptoms improve, the amount of fluids can be increased and light, bland foods can be tried.
6. Sleeping is allowed. However, wake up the injured person every 2 hours for the next 8 hours. Ask them to move their arms and legs, ask them simple questions, and shine a light in their eyes and watch how their pupils react. The injured person should:
 - Wake up normally
 - Talk clearly
 - Have pupils of equal size and reaction to light
 - Be able to move all arms and legs.
7. Call us *immediately* if any of the following symptoms occur at any time:
 - Difficulty waking up the injured person, over and above the normal tiredness
 - Slurred speech
 - One pupil becomes larger than the other (Normally, each pupil should get equal smaller in response to light shined in the eyes)
 - Weakness in an arm or leg, poor coordination, difficulty walking, or numbness
 - Severe or worsening headache or severe neck pain
 - Persistent vomiting (one or two episodes of vomiting is not abnormal after a head injury)
 - Blurred or double vision
 - Severe irritability or confusion (mild confusion is not unusual – call if this continues beyond 24 to 48 hours, or worsens)
 - Seizure or convulsion
 - Unconsciousness

