

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. 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

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.

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