

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 and 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 below.



DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE:

Headaches or seizures?

Changes in physical health?






Changes in mood, personality or behavior?

Problems communicating, paying attention or thinking?

Any other problems that concern you?



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



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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, or
- evaluation of behavior, thinking and communicating by a child psychiatrist or a licensed psychologist with a speciality in pediatric neuropsychology.

These professionals may:

- help you understand the changes in your child,
- recommend simple changes in your child's routine that may help,
- refer you to a rehabilitation specialist to help your child recover and learn important coping skills, and
- offer plans that will help in school and around your community.

Call the Brain Injury Association of New York State:

(518) 459-7911 Main Office
(800) 228-8201 Family Helpline
E-mail: info@bianys.org
Website: www.bianys.org

Listed are the problems seen most often when a child's brain is injured. Not every problem that could happen is on this list.

See the back of this flyer for additional details.



HEALTH PROBLEMS including:

Headache and Pain

- headache that keeps coming back
- any other face or head pain
- neck and shoulder pain that happens a lot
- other unexplained body pain

Sleep Problems

- can't sleep through the night
- tired and drowsy
- sleeps too much
- days and nights get mixed up
- new need for naps

Sensory Changes

- bothered by smells, light or sounds
- changes in taste or smell
- ringing in the ears
- hearing loss
- can't handle normal background noise
- feels too hot or too cold
- blurry vision
- seeing double

Balance Problems

- dizziness
- trouble with balance

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 changes
- wants to be alone or away from people
- is afraid of others, blames others
- wants to be taken care of
- doesn't know how to act with people
- takes risks without thinking first

- is sad, depressed
- doesn't want to do anything, can't "get started"
- trips, falls, drops things, is awkward
- eats too little, eats all the time, or eats things that aren't food
- has different sexual behavior
- starts using or has a different reaction to alcohol or drugs

THINKING PROBLEMS

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

TROUBLE COMMUNICATING

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