

Head Injuries - Do's And Don'ts

The brain is a very soft and a delicate organ. However, the protection offered by the head to the brain is limited and a hard and sudden blow to the head can result in injury to the brain or the spinal cord, not apparent through any visible signs on the head or the face. This is the reason why all head injuries are considered to be serious unless certified otherwise.

Head injuries are of two kinds - Open and Closed. Open head injuries, are apparent head injuries with bleeding or marks on the face or the skull. Closed head injuries are injuries that have no signs of injury externally. Open head injuries being apparent can be taken care of with medical help. Closed head injuries are more serious in nature since it is difficult to gauge the cause, scale or area of injury on the face of it.

The brain is a soft and jelly-like organ protected by the skull. This jelly like organ floats inside the skull in a nourishing liquid also called the cerebrospinal fluid. This fluid not only nourishes the brain but also acts as a shock absorber. However, the protection extended by this liquid is limited to small knock and jars. A hard impact can injure the brain by smashing it against the insides of the skull, bruising it or tearing important blood vessels. If the blood vessels are torn or ruptured the brain would then begin to leak blood and serum, leading to an increase in pressure inside the skull. Since the skull has only so much volume, this increase in intracranial pressure can result in permanent damage to the brain by crushing.

How to judge and handle a head injury

Professional medical care is always recommended for a head injury, but there could be some first aid that can be administered.

Blood can never be the reliable indicator of a head injury. Wounds can be superficial, but the seriousness of a head injury can be judged by -

- Consciousness: A person afflicted by a head injury may become unconscious or may remain in a conscious state but become drowsy or confused. Check the injured for breathing and turn to one side without disturbing the neck and the head are too much. If the injured is not breathing, check for the pulse. If the pulse is positive try giving mouth to mouth resuscitation at one every four seconds by pinching the injured's nose. In case of no pulse try cardiac compression and alternate with mouth to mouth resuscitation.
- Skull deformities: A deformed skull either compressed or swollen are signs of a fracture.
- Clear fluid leak: Leaking of clear fluid from the ears or nose is a symptom that the skull has been fractured most probably at the base. Gently cover or pad the ear and turn the injured to the affected side. In case of bleeding try and control it by applying pressure to the wound.
- Black eyes or skin bruises: These symptoms indicate blood vessel rupture around the eyes and ears.
- Vision changes: Dilation of pupils of the eyes indicates a serious head injury and can result in blurred or double vision.
- Nausea: The most common side effect of head injury is nausea and vomiting. Make sure the airway to the injured is clear and he is breathing.

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