
WHAT IS A CLOSED HEAD INJURY?

A closed head injury or a concussion refers to the injury that occurs when the head sustains a blow to it. The brain is surrounded by the skull, and when the skull is hit, the brain is shaken up. It can be bruised by hitting the walls of the skull. Examination of the brain and nerves may be normal, but sometimes problems can show up later. The person with the head injury may have had a CT or MRI. **Computed tomographic (CT)** scan tests use high speed x-rays. CT images can show swelling, bleeding, or compression of brain tissue. **Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** tests use magnetic energy to produce detailed images of brain tissue, bones, and other structures.



TREATMENT



The person who has been seen by a medical professional and diagnosed with a closed head injury, has treatment prescribed as follows:

- NO alcohol or sedatives during the next 48 hours.
- A person with a head injury, should rest quietly for about 24 hours.
- It will be necessary to have a responsible person watch the patient with a closed head injury for the next 24-48 hours.
- Eat simple foods, such as soup or other liquids for the first 24 hours after the injury. Do not eat solid foods.
- Avoid strenuous physical activities for at least 24 hours after injury.
- Apply an ice bag to the head to reduce swelling.

Head Injury

More than 1 million head injuries occur every year in the United States. Because head injuries (also known as **traumatic brain injuries**) are common and may have devastating effects, preventing them is critical. Traumatic brain injury is the result of a blow to the head. This can come from a fall, a vehicle crash, as assault, or shaking a baby. The brain tissue itself may be injured, the blood vessels can rupture and cause bleeding, or combinations of these injuries may occur. **Concussion** (a temporary loss of brain function) **contusion** (bruising of the brain), **fracture** (broken skull bones), and **hematoma** (blood clots) are all types of traumatic brain injury.

SYMPTOMS & SIGNS OF A CONCUSSION

- Headache
- Inability to remember what happened just before and just after the head injury.
- Confusion
- Inability to carry out a simple set of instructions
- Vision disturbance
- Unsteadiness, loss of balance
- Nausea or vomiting

An individual does not have to have lost consciousness to have a concussion. In many cases, the symptoms of a mild concussion disappear within minutes. Some individuals who have a head injury may still have poor memory and concentration, headache, fatigue, and dizziness for several weeks to months. This is known as post concussion syndrome.

FOLLOW-UP INSTRUCTIONS

For your
Closed head injury

- Do not eat solid foods.
- Eat simple foods, such as soup or other liquids for the first 24 hours after the injury.
- Avoid strenuous physical activities for at least 24 hours after the injury.
- Apply an ice bag to the head to reduce swelling.
- Avoid taking aspirin or medications containing aspirin.
- NO alcohol or sedatives during the next 48 hours.

PREVENTION

Always make sure to wear properly fitting protective head gear when playing a contact sport or while engaging in any other activity during which a blow to the head can occur, including riding a bicycle or motorcycle, skateboarding or inline skating.

CALL UHS

IMMEDIATELY IF:

- Unusually sleepy or difficult to arouse.
- Persistent nausea or vomiting occurs more than three (3) times.
- Patient has any dizziness, confusion or change in usual behavior.
- Has any slurred speech or difficulty speaking.
- Any increased irritability or sluggishness.
- Difficulty seeing, waking, or using the arms.
- Any bleeding or drainage from ears, mouth, or nose.
- New or worsening neck pain.
- Headache persists longer than 24 hours or becomes more intense beyond 12 hours after injury.
- Any other symptoms that seem unusual to you.

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UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES
SAINT LIAM HALL
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Available 24/7 during the Academic Year

CLOSED HEAD INJURIES (concussions)

Follow-up care



"Are you o.k.?..."

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
NOTRE DAME IN 46556
<http://uhs.nd.edu>