If your child continues to experience certain symptoms 4 to 6 weeks following the event, you can contact the CHU Sainte-Justine at (514) 345-5915.

Prévention

There are a number of possible ways to prevent children from suffering a traumatic brain injury:

- Using correctly-installed child car seats that are appropriate for the child’s age and size;
- Ensuring close adult supervision;
- Wearing appropriate safety equipment when doing sports and recreational activities (ex.: safety helmets).

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Your child has suffered a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI). This accident can be very worrisome for the child and family. This leaflet is intended to provide you with information, and to help you gain a better understanding of what has happened.

A physical checkup showed that your child is fine, and that there is nothing to worry about. It is preferable that your child gets rest at home.

What is a mild traumatic brain injury?

A mild traumatic brain injury, commonly known as a cerebral concussion, is usually caused by a blow to the head. The brain shakes inside the skull during the impact of the accident. This temporarily disrupts the brain’s normal function, causing loss of consciousness or behavioral changes (e.g., no knowledge of where they are; no memory of the accident).

What are the possible signs and symptoms?

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Sleepiness
- Fatigue
- Changes in behavior
- Irritability
- Agitation
- Dizziness, loss of balance
- Memory, attention and concentration problems

The most intense symptoms usually last about 1 to 2 weeks, but may persist longer, from 4 to 6 weeks, but with less intensity.

About 98% of people who suffer a mild traumatic brain injury recover without any long-term side effects.

What to do?

- Give acetaminophen to relieve headaches or any other pain. Use as directed by the manufacturer or doctor.
- Put your child on a light diet for the first 24 hours or until any nausea or vomiting subsides. For example, you can give them as much liquids, broth or Jello® as they are able to tolerate.
- Make sure your child gets bed rest for a period of 48 hours. Raise the head of the bed with one or two pillows.
- Prohibit your child from playing any sports or doing physical activities for 4 to 6 weeks, then allow your child to resume these activities gradually, starting with less intensive ones (practice instead of a game), unless any symptoms reappear.

In the first 24 hours following the injury, it is natural that your child will feel sleepy. Waking your child each time they fall asleep is not necessary. Gently tap your child every 4 hours to physically stimulate them so that they can return to bed without fully waking up. Fully wake your child up if your child is not moving.

When to see the doctor?

Do not wait to see your doctor, if you notice any one of the following symptoms:

- Seizure;
- Blood or clear fluids leaking from the ears or nose (except if related to cold symptoms);
- Intolerable headache pain that does not subside with acetaminophen or other recommended medication;
- Difficulty waking up;
- Persisting vomiting (more than 3 episodes within a period of 6 hours);
- Irritability;
- Confusion (no knowledge of where they are or who they are);
- Trouble seeing;
- Difficulty speaking;
- Difficulty walking.