

CHU Sainte-Justine

3175, chemin de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine
Montréal (Québec) H3T 1C5
Téléphone: 514 345-4931

www.chusj.org



Head Injury In Pre-School Children (0-5 years)

Information intended for parents

If your child still has symptoms
4 to 6 weeks after the injury,
you can contact
the CHU Sainte-Justine
Traumatology team
from Monday to Friday 8 am to 4 pm,
at 514-345-4931, ext. 5915.



For more information, please visit our website:

[www.chusj.org/fr/soins-services/T/
Traumatologie/La-clinique-du-traumatisme-
cranio-cerebral-\(TCC\)](http://www.chusj.org/fr/soins-services/T/Traumatologie/La-clinique-du-traumatisme-cranio-cerebral-(TCC))

Reviewed by

Dre Marianne Beaudin

Pediatric surgeon and chief of traumatology

Sophie Boissonneault

Clinical nurse in traumatology

Tina Del Duca

Assistant director of rehabilitation

Dr Hugo Paquin

Pediatric emergency medicine

Gwenaëlle Trottet

Clinical coordinator in traumatology

Graphic design by

JoAnne Ferlatte

Programmes transversaux et SACOÉ, CRME

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Your child has suffered a head injury.

This leaflet is intended to provide you with some information, and to help you gain a better understanding of what has happened, and hopefully alleviate some worries you may have.

What is a head injury ?

A head injury is usually caused by a fall or a blow to the head. The brain gets shaken inside the skull during the impact of the accident, which can temporarily disrupt the brain's normal functions.

Your child may develop symptoms. When these symptoms are present, we talk about a mild traumatic brain injury, commonly known as a cerebral concussion.

What are the possible signs and symptoms ?

- Headaches
- Nausea, vomiting
- Dizziness, loss of balance
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Feeling slowed down
- Fatigue, sleeping difficulty
- Changes in behaviour, more emotional
- Memory, attention and concentration problems

The most intense symptoms usually last about 1 to 2 weeks and gradually lessen, but may persist longer, from 4 to 6 weeks.

What to do ?

- Give acetaminophen to relieve headaches or any other pain.
- 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 liquids, broth or Jello® as tolerated.
- If your child is tired or sleepy, let him/her rest as needed.

When to see the doctor ?

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

- Difficulty waking up, altered level of consciousness
- Seizure
- Intolerable or worsening headache
- Persistent vomiting
- Confusion, worsening irritability or unusual behaviors
- Significant neck pain
- Difficulty walking
- Difficulty speaking
- Trouble seeing
- Weakness or numbness in the arms or legs

Return to activities

An initial period of rest of 24 to 48 hours may be necessary. Afterwards, your child can return to his daily activities as tolerated as long as the symptoms do not worsen.

You should note that if symptoms are exacerbated by an activity, an additional 24h rest period may be necessary before resuming that same activity.

Prevention

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

- Using correctly-installed child car seats that are appropriate for the child's age and size. Please refer to the SAAQ website under the section "child safety seats" for more information.
<https://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/road-safety/behaviours/child-safety-seats/>
- Ensuring close adult supervision during sports and activities.
- Wearing appropriate safety equipment when doing sports and recreational activities (ex. : safety helmets).

