

## Recommendations:

- ✓ If possible, the patient should not be alone for 24 hours and should be awakened every TWO hours to check on awareness of name, date, and where s/he is
- ✓ Rest as much as possible for 2-3 days, then slowly return to normal activities
- ✓ Avoid strenuous activities at least for the next 24 hours
- ✓ Light diet for first 24 hours; limit food intake to small feedings
- ✓ No sleeping pills, tranquilizers or alcohol
- ✓ No medications should be taken unless prescribed by the doctor
- ✓ Do not drive a car or operate tools and instruments which could be harmful if the person is not alert

## Long Term Problems

Sometimes symptoms take up to a year or longer to surface. Talk to the doctor if you:

- ✓ Are feeling depressed or very emotional
- ✓ Have memory loss or mental slowness
- ✓ Have poor balance or lack of coordination
- ✓ Lack usual energy
- ✓ Have feelings of tension and nervousness

## Resources (state)

**Brain Injury Association of Oklahoma**  
PO Box 88  
Hillsdale, OK 73743  
Tel: 800/765-6809 or 580/233-4363

**OASIS**  
(Oklahoma Areawide Services Information System)  
Tel: 800/426-2747

**Traumatic Neurologic Injury Advisory Council**  
Oklahoma State Department of Health  
Tel: 405/271-3430

**Oklahoma State Department of Education**  
Tel: 405/521-3301

**Oklahoma Indian Health Service**  
Tel.: 405/951-3716

**Oklahoma Insurance Department**  
Tel.: 405/521-2828

**Oklahoma Department of Human Services**  
Tel.: 405/521-3646

**University Affiliated Programs**  
Tel.: 405/271-4500

Produced by the Injury Prevention Service, OSDH, in cooperation with Oklahoma hospitals. Funded in part by Grant #2H21MC00025-02 from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The contents are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of DHHS.

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Information  
You Need to Know  
About

# Head Injury

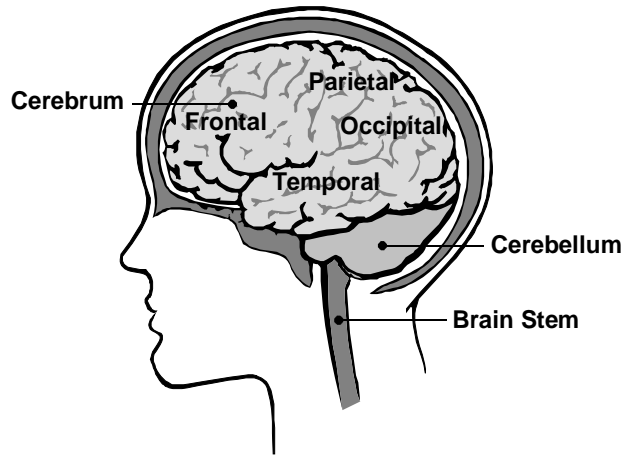
*For reference after  
your visit to the  
Emergency Department*

**Oklahoma State  
Department of Health**



## Traumatic Head Or Brain Injury

results from trauma such as an object striking the head or the head striking an object, and/or rapid acceleration and deceleration of the brain inside the skull as with a car crash. The injuries may be open or closed. The brain has three parts and four lobes. The problems people may have after injury depend on the part of the brain which was injured and how badly it was hurt.



## Effects Of Head Injury

Sometimes symptoms or problems appear which can be signs of more severe injury.

**Although signs of serious head injury may be delayed weeks, the first 24 hours after injury are usually the most critical. If any of the problems listed on the next page occur, contact your physician immediately, go to the nearest emergency department, or return to this emergency department (even if it is several months after the head injury).**

## Physical

- ✓ Nausea and/or repeated vomiting
- ✓ Continued or worsening headache
- ✓ New or increased neck pain or stiffness
- ✓ Persistent dizziness
- ✓ Trouble speaking or slurred speech, or swallowing
- ✓ Irregular or labored breathing
- ✓ Unusual drowsiness or unable to awaken (or arouse) as usual
- ✓ Problems with movement or gait
- ✓ Unsteadiness or lack of coordination or balance
- ✓ Loss of consciousness/unconsciousness
- ✓ Numbness, paralysis or weakness of arms or legs; numbness of skin
- ✓ Convulsions or unusual twitching (seizure)
- ✓ Stumbling or other problems with normal use of arms or legs
- ✓ Blood or clear fluid draining from nose or ears
- ✓ Increasing scalp or face swelling
- ✓ Redness, warmth or drainage from a swollen area
- ✓ Fever over 100 degrees F
- ✓ Sleeping problems
- ✓ Easily tired

## Behavior

- ✓ Change in behavior or personality
- ✓ Extreme restlessness or agitation
- ✓ Irritable, anxious or overreacts to situations
- ✓ Mood swings
- ✓ Impulsiveness
- ✓ Sad or depressed
- ✓ Slow to respond

## Sensory

- ✓ Changes in taste or smell
- ✓ Ringing in the ears, bothered by noise
- ✓ Hearing loss
- ✓ Sensitive to temperature
- ✓ Visual problems such as seeing double, blurred vision
- ✓ Unusual movement of eyes
- ✓ Trouble seeing clearly, walking, or using arms
- ✓ Unequal pupils—one large, one small pupil (may occur after serious physical or thinking signs become apparent)



## Thinking

- ✓ Delirium, or disorientation
- ✓ Mental confusion (can't remember, abnormal conversation, etc.) or changes in behavior
- ✓ Unable to tell what day it is, where they are, or what happened to them
- ✓ Reacts and thinks slowly
- ✓ Trouble paying attention or concentrating
- ✓ Not aware of physical and thinking problems
- ✓ Develops problems with words or sentences
- ✓ Has a harder time learning

## Additional Signs to Watch for In Children

- ✓ High pitched crying in infants
- ✓ Fussiness or irritability
- ✓ Can't be consoled
- ✓ Won't nurse or eat
- ✓ Changes in behavior that are not developmentally related