Head Injury – Immediate Considerations

IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION should be sought for a person who has had a head injury and exhibits any of the following signs or symptoms:

- An increasingly severe headache
- Unusual sleepiness, irritability, confusion, agitation, or odd behavior. Of course, many preschoolers nap at some point during the day but if a head-injured person seems excessively sleepy at a time when he/she does not usually take a nap, they should be medically evaluated.
- Recurrent vomiting
- Unsteadiness or imbalance with walking, inability to use their arms or legs normally, or, in an infant, inability to remain steady or upright while sitting (if the infant was doing that prior to the injury).
- Patient complains of double vision or blurry vision
- Slurred speech or not “making sense”.
- Even if you are not certain but are concerned something is “not right” with the patient. It is always best to be cautious.

If a patient is sent home after a medical evaluation WE DO NOT RECOMMEND YOU CHECK THE SIZE OF THEIR PUPILS. Pupils may differ in size from one another and may change in size, even minute to minute. Besides, if the person were to develop unequal pupils, they would also probably have one of the signs or symptoms listed above.

For the person who has already had a medical evaluation, it is OK for the patient to sleep after a head injury and WE DO NOT RECOMMEND YOU WAKE THEM PERIODICALLY if they are sleeping after the injury. They need the sleep.

If the patient falls asleep, simply observe if he or she looks like they usually do when asleep and is breathing comfortably. In the daytime, you can wake them up after they have slept for the length of time of a typical nap. At night, let them sleep - you can peek in on them periodically.

Contact your medical provider if you have any questions or concerns.

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