



# CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

## Head Injury: After Your Child's Visit

### Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Your child has a mild head injury. It is common for children (and adults) to not remember what happened right before or right after a head injury. Sometimes a child passes out (loses consciousness) for a few seconds or minutes right after the injury.

The doctor carefully checked your child and did not find a serious head injury. But a serious problem could develop later. That is why it is important for you to watch your child closely for the next 24 hours.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

### How can you care for your child at home?

- Watch your child closely for the next 24 hours for signs that your child's head injury is getting worse. (See **When should you call for help?** below for symptoms to look for.)
- Your child may sleep. If your doctor tells you to, check your child at the suggested times to make sure he or she is able to wake up, recognize you, and act normally.
- Put a cold, moist towel on the sore area to reduce swelling.
- Give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) as needed for pain. Do not give your child any other medicines unless your doctor tells you to. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.
- Your child should take it easy for the next few days or longer if he or she is not feeling well.
- Ask your doctor when your child can play sports or do other exercise.

## What is postconcussion syndrome?

If your child has a mild concussion, he or she may have a mild headache or just feel "not quite right." These symptoms are common and usually go away on their own over a few days to 4 weeks. Sometimes, an older child who has a head injury may tell you that he or she feels different than before. He or she may have new symptoms. This is called postconcussion syndrome. Your child may:

- Not be able to concentrate or remember.
- Have headaches.
- Have changes in his or her sleep. Your child may not be able to sleep, or he or she may sleep all the time.
- Have changes in personality.
- Lack interest in daily activities.
- Get angry or anxious for no clear reason.
- Get dizzy, lightheaded, or unsteady and have trouble standing or walking.

## When should you call for help?

**Call 911** anytime you think your child may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- Your child has twitching, jerking, or other symptoms of a seizure.
- Your child passes out (loses consciousness).
- Your child suddenly cannot walk or stand.
- Your child is confused, does not know where he or she is, or is extremely sleepy or hard to wake up.

**Call your doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your child has new vomiting or continues to vomit after 2 hours.
- Your child has a new watery (not like mucus from a cold) or bloody fluid coming from the nose or ears.
- Your child has weakness or numbness in any part of the body.
- Your child has any changes in vision.
- Your child will not stop crying.
- Your child's headaches get worse.

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Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your child has trouble concentrating.
- Your child does not get better as expected.

## Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter M664 in the search box to learn more about "**Head Injury: After Your Child's Visit**".

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