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## Head Injury

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_

Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

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DATE INITIAL**I. The client/caregiver can list general facts about head injury.**

- A. It causes about 80,000 deaths per year.
- B. Half of traumatic brain injuries are caused by collisions involving cars, motorcycles, or bicycles.
- C. It is the major cause of death in individuals who are 1 to 35 years old but affects all ages.
- D. Infants and small children can receive brain injuries as a result of being shaken violently.
- E. The brain swells after injury, causing pressure.
- F. The risk of traumatic brain injury is highest in children (0 to 4 years old) and adolescents (15 to 19 years old).
- G. All persons with head injuries should be examined by a physician.

**II. The client/caregiver can list various types of head injury.**

- A. Scalp injury—lacerations, abrasions, and hematomas
- B. Skull fractures—may have drainage from ears and nose, headache, hearing impairment, bruising around the eyes
- C. Concussions—may cause amnesia, headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and a loss of consciousness for 5 minutes or less
- D. Contusions—may cause mental changes, paresis or paralysis, unequal pupils
- E. Subdural hematoma—blood that accumulates between brain and skull

**III. The client/caregiver can list symptoms of a mild brain injury.**

- A. Brief period of unconsciousness
- B. Headache
- C. Confusion
- D. Dizziness
- E. Blurred vision, ringing in the ears, or a bad taste in the mouth

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- F. Mood changes
- G. Memory or concentration problems

**IV. The client/caregiver can list signs and symptoms of a moderate or severe injury.**

- A. Persistent headache
- B. Repeated vomiting or nausea
- C. Convulsions or seizures
- D. Inability to awaken from sleep
- E. Dilation of one or both pupils of the eyes
- F. Slurred speech
- G. Weakness or numbness in the extremities
- H. A loss of coordination
- I. Increased confusion or agitation

**V. The client/caregiver can list symptoms and signs to watch for in a child with a brain injury.**

- A. They may refuse to eat.
- B. They may appear listless or cranky.
- C. Sleep patterns and performance in school may change.

**VI. The client/caregiver can list symptoms that indicate need for evaluation by a physician.**

- A. Increased confusion, lethargy, and behavior changes
- B. Incoordination, weakness in extremities
- C. Leakage of clear fluid from ear, nose, or throat
- D. Visual changes, blurred vision, double vision, and so forth
- E. Change in judgment, memory, and concentration
- F. Slurred speech
- G. Change in size of one pupil
- H. Vomiting
- I. Restlessness

**VII. The client/caregiver can list measures to prevent brain injuries.**

- A. Always use seat belts in motor vehicle. Use appropriate car seats for children.

(Continued)

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- B. Never drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- C. Store firearms (unloaded) in locked cabinet. Store bullets somewhere else.
- D. Wear helmets when
  - Riding bike, skateboard, motorcycle, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicles
  - Batting or running bases or playing contact sports
- E. Use home safety teaching guide to safety proof home for adults and children.
- F. Inspect playground equipment and supervise children using it.
- G. Regular vision tests can reduce risk of falling.

**VIII. The client/caregiver can state measures for management of a head injury.**

- A. Give medications as ordered and report any side effects.
- B. Keep follow-up appointments with physician and therapists.
- C. Avoid alcohol, driving, unsupervised smoking, and the use of hazardous equipment.

**IX. The client/caregiver can state possible complications.**

- A. Coma
- B. Seizures
- C. Infections (meningitis most common)
- D. Nerve damage to facial muscles or nerves involving eye movements

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- E. Cognitive losses (short-term memory is most common)
- F. Sensory problems (clumsy, double vision, taste, and smell changes)
- G. Swallowing problems
- H. Trouble with spoken and written language
- I. Personality change (impulse control and inappropriate behavior common)

**RESOURCES**

Brain Injury Association of America  
[www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org)

Counseling for prolonged stress to the family

Rehabilitation centers

Agencies for financial assistance

**REFERENCES**

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