

Head Injury

Types of Head Injuries

There are 2 types of head injuries.

❑ **Closed head injury:** This injury occurs when an object strikes (hits) your head but does not break through the skull. You may:

- have bleeding from your scalp, ears, mouth, nose or within your brain
- have a concussion (a blow to the head that affects how the brain works). Signs of a concussion can include headache, dizziness and vision issues.
- lose consciousness or have a seizure.

❑ **Open head injury:** This injury occurs when an object fractures (goes through) the skull. You may have bleeding from your scalp, ears, mouth, nose or within your brain.

Common causes include sports injuries (golf clubs or baseball bats), military wounds (gunshot or shrapnel), and motor vehicle accidents.

Symptoms of a Head Injury

Symptoms range from mild to severe. They may show up right away or several days or weeks later.

A **mild** head injury may cause:

- headaches
- dizziness
- lightheadedness

- blurred vision
- nausea (upset stomach)
- vomiting (throwing up)
- short-term (temporary) weakness
- short-term confusion or memory loss.

A **moderate** head injury may cause long-term:

- personality and behavior changes
- memory problems
- problems with muscle control (dyscoordination)
- vision problems.

A **severe** head injury may cause:

- blinding headache
- vomiting you cannot control
- slurred speech
- feeling agitated
- severe dyscoordination
- loss of consciousness
- seizures.

Treating a Head Injury

Treatment of a head injury will depend on the type of damage done to your brain. You may work with a physical therapist, an occupational therapist or both for:

- improving your:
 - vision
 - coordination
 - memory, attention, language and problem-solving skills
- strengthening your muscles
- using a walker, cane or other aids
- learning how to get dressed, take care of your hygiene needs, and use the toilet.

A therapist will also assess and support your emotional needs.