

At what point should we take a child to the doctor when he or she hits their head and you are not sure how serious it is?

The American Academy of Paediatrics recommends that parents contact their child's healthcare provider for advice for anything more than a light bump on the head. Depending upon the circumstances, this may be done over the phone, at the paediatrician's office or in an emergency room. There are specific indications that the child needs to be evaluated by a physician. This applies if the child ...

- loses consciousness after the injury
- has recurrent vomiting
- has a seizure
- develops a headache that is severe or worsens with time
- experiences behavioural changes – is difficult to wake, for instance, or is unusually irritable
- has difficulty walking or lacks coordination
- is confused, or has slurred speech
- has dizziness that does not go away, or which recurs
- has blood or watery fluid oozing from the nose or ears
- has a cut that will not stop bleeding after pressure is applied for 10 minutes

These symptoms may indicate a higher risk of complication. Any child younger than six months, a child that was hit with a high speed object, or a child who falls from more than their own height should also be evaluated by a doctor.

Courtesy Heidi Elmaarouf RN, professional nurse and American Heart Association Lead Instructor. You can email questions to her via advisor@abudhabiweek.com

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