

Bumps & bruises

Part of growing up

It is almost impossible to prevent every accident, although there are things we can do at home which might help. Minor cuts, bumps and bruises are a normal part of growing up. Allowing your child to explore the world around them (with supervision) helps them develop and learn. Most of your child's bumps will require no more than a cuddle or a plaster to make them better. You will quickly be able to tell by the noise of the bang, the reaction of your child and the colour of the area affected, which are the more serious bumps. If your child has unexplained bruising or injury, you need to find out how this happened.

If it looks like the bump may swell, use a cold flannel (soaking the cloth with cold water) or ice pack (but don't put ice directly onto the skin) to help reduce swelling and to cool the area for at least a few minutes.

If your child has had a bump to the head and it looks serious or symptoms worsen, call your GP. Read the information on the right.

Head injury

One of the signs of a severe head injury is being unusually sleepy, this does not mean you cannot let your child sleep.

You need to get medical attention if:

- **They are vomiting persistently (more than three times).**
- **They are complaining it hurts.**
- **They are not responding at all.**
- **Pain is not relieved by sugarfree paracetamol or ibuprofen.**

If your child is tired from what's happened, or from crying, then it is fine to let them sleep. If you are worried in any way about their drowsiness, then you should wake your child an hour after they go to sleep. Check they are okay and responding normally throughout the night.

Sports injury

Playing sport and doing regular exercise is good for your health, but can sometimes result in injury. Half of activity-related accidents in the home involving children under 14 are caused by trampolining, study of hospital admissions shows.

Use of protective equipment: Can be effective in reducing injury but is dependent on the sport played. This includes helmets (e.g. in cycling, cricket and skiing), ankle braces, mouthguards (e.g. in football, rugby and basketball), wrist and elbow guards (e.g. in skiing), and eye goggles (e.g. in lacrosse).

Changing rules of play: Modifying rules of play to prohibit aggressive or dangerous behaviour has been associated with a decrease in reported sporting injuries (e.g. in rugby or American football where they have been associated with reductions in spinal cord injuries).

Supervised play: Make sure your child attends supervised sessions with trained trainers.

1

After a fall, comfort your child, check for injuries, treat bumps and bruises.

2

Give your child some **sugar-free** paracetamol and let them rest whilst watching them closely.

3

Seek immediate help if they:

- Have seriously injured themselves.
- Are unconscious.
- Have difficulty breathing.
- Are having a seizure.