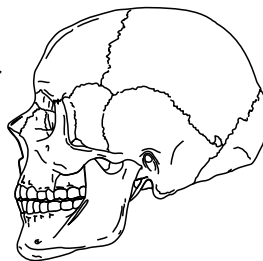


A head injury is an injury to the brain or to the skull surrounding the brain following trauma. Head injuries should never be taken lightly. A doctor must evaluate any period of unconsciousness. Ring for an Ambulance immediately and watch for deterioration of casualty's condition. With head injuries, always suspect spinal injuries, and treat accordingly. In some cases the casualty may not have received a trauma to the head, but may have severely jarred the head, causing an injury to the brain.

## Causes:

- A rapidly moving blunt object striking the head or the head hitting a hard surface.
- Car and motorcycle accidents.
- Diving into shallow water.
- Sport



## Concussion:

Concussion is caused by the bruising or shaking of the brain within the skull due to trauma or a severe jarring to the head. This causes a disturbance in the brain, which is temporary. A person is diagnosed as suffering from concussion, once the casualty has fully recovered.

## Severe Head Injuries:

Severe Head Injuries are caused by severe trauma to the head and as a result, the brain is injured. Injuries to the brain can leave permanent disabilities to the casualty. Recovery can be a slow process

These are genuine emergencies. Seek medical aid immediately. Head injuries are the leading cause of death following trauma. Be prepared for the casualty's condition to deteriorate.

## Progressive / Compressed Head injury:

This serious form of head injury is often difficult to diagnose and usually requires surgery to rectify the damage caused to the brain. Progressive or compressed head injuries occur when the brain swells, a small blood vessel bleeds, or a skull fracture pointing inwards and puts pressure on the brain inside the skull. Progressive or compressed head injuries can develop immediately after the injury occurs or it may be delayed for hours or even days in some cases. As the condition develops, the level of responsiveness from the casualty will deteriorate the longer the condition is left untreated.

## Fractured Base of the Skull:

This occurs when either the base, front or side of the skull is fractured.

If an Ambulance is required - call immediately - do not delay

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## Signs and Symptoms may include:

- Decreased level of consciousness, partial, brief or permanent.
- Bruise, lump, or wound to the head.
- Headache
- Possible nausea or vomiting.
- Abnormal response to stimuli.
- Blurred vision
- Laboured breathing.
- Weak pulse.
- Blood or clear fluid running from the ears and / or nose.
- Abnormal response to verbal or painful stimuli.
- Unequal or dilated pupils.
- Possible Seizures.
- With a fractured base of skull sometimes the mouth is open and bleeding into the eyes occurs.

***Unequal pupils may occur. However, this is usually a late sign that damage may have already occurred to the brain***

## Treatment:

Follow the Basic First Aid Plan to assess the casualty

- ✓ If casualty is unconscious, place in the lateral position supporting the head and neck.
- ✓ If casualty is conscious, place casualty in a comfortable position supporting the head and neck.
- ✓ If ear is weeping, lean injured side down and place a pad under it.
- ✓ If possible apply a cervical collar; collars can consist of towels or jumpers. If not available manually support the head. If a fractured base of the skull is suspected then manually support the head.
- ✓ Control bleeding.
- ✓ Complete a secondary assessment and treat any other injuries.
- ✓ Call for an Ambulance immediately.



- ✗ DO NOT FORCE THE MOUTH CLOSED AS YOU MAY FRACTURE THEIR JAW.
- ✗ WITH ANY HEAD INJURY ALWAYS SUSPECT SPINAL INJURIES.

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