

Suggested Head Injury Protocol

1. If a client falls and hits their head. First note their LOC (level of consciousness).
 - a. If they are not awake and not responding, call 911.
 - i. Do not move them unless they are in an unsafe space.
2. If a suspected neck injury is present
 - a. Call 911 and do not move.
 - i. An example might be if someone fell down a flight of stairs and is unconscious.
3. If they fell and bumped their head
 - a. are they now vomiting?
 - i. If so, a concussion could be present.
 - ii. If nausea and/or vomiting is present after a head injury, go to ER/urgent care.
4. For a more minor injury such as a cut on the head with no changes in consciousness a. Do first aid.
 - i. Apply pressure to the open area.
 - ii. If minor and no stitches are needed, clean the area with mild soap and water, dry by patting not rubbing.
 - iii. Apply an antibiotic ointment and cover with a clean dressing.
 1. Change the dressing at least daily but more often if wet and/or saturated.
 - b. If significant bleeding and stitches are needed, go to ER/Urgent care.
 - c. Monitor any open areas for signs of infection.
 - i. Usually, it will be a few days after the injury. Look for swelling, redness, colored drainage, foul smell, fever and increased pain.
 - ii. If the antibiotic cream is not helping an oral antibiotic is probably needed so contact the physician or go to urgent care/ER.
5. Note coordination and movement following a fall and/or head injury.
 - a. Is it normal for the person? Are they having balance issues post fall?
 - i. If balance issues are present, go to ER/Urgent care.
6. If a lump or bump on the head is present
 - a. Apply ice with a washcloth to protect the skin.
 - i. Apply for 20 mins to help reduce any swelling.
 - ii. Do this a few times a day for the first day.
 - b. If lump or bump is present, with a change in LOC
 - i. ER/urgent care immediately.
7. Check vital signs.
 - a. Do this initially post fall.
 - b. If they did bump their head,
 - i. do this every hour for the first 4 hours.
 - ii. Then every 4 hours for the remainder of the 24-hour period.
 - c. Note any changes from their baseline readings.
 - i. Are they higher than normal? Are they running really low? Fever?

1. Contact the doctor if any significant changes are present or go to ER/Urgent Care.

Please keep in mind these are suggested guidelines. I can't cover every possible situation so if you think it is a significant injury, please err on the side of caution and go to ER.