

## Head Injuries

When people bang their heads it can be difficult to tell whether they have done any serious damage. Most head injuries are not serious and simply result on a bump or bruise. Fortunately, the majority of falls or blows to the head, result in injury to the scalp only and this are more frightening than life threatening – the head and face are served by numerous blood vessels and consequently these injuries bleed profusely and can be very scary!

It is very important to look out for anything unusual following a head injury as a severe bang on the head could cause swelling and damage to the brain and it is vitally important that you recognise any early and worrying signs of increased pressure on the brain.

### What to Look for and What to Do

Call an ambulance if someone shows any of these symptoms:

- unconsciousness
- abnormal breathing
- obvious serious wound or suspected skull fracture
- bleeding or clear fluid from the nose, ear, or mouth
- disturbance of speech or vision
- pupils of unequal size
- weakness or paralysis
- dizziness
- neck pain or stiffness
- fitting
- vomiting more than two to three times – (it is not unusual for people to vomit immediately after an accident as a response to pain, so do not panic if an injured person is sick just once after a head injury).
- Observe them carefully for the next 48 hours. No one should go home to an empty house for the 48 hours following a severe head injury. If you notice any of the signs of brain injury, phone an ambulance immediately.
- If the casualty is **unusually drowsy** or can't be woken, or they show any symptoms of a brain injury, call an ambulance immediately. People can go to sleep following a head injury, but only if they appear to be completely alert and showing no signs of confusion, losing consciousness or any other symptoms. If worried seek medical attention immediately.