EMERGENCY!
Head Injury Guidelines

Head injuries — whether obvious or not — can cause bleeding inside the skull, placing pressure on the brain and causing brain damage. However, not all injuries are life threatening. Some warrant an immediate trip to the emergency room, while others can be evaluated and treated in the doctor's office.

Go to the emergency room when the victim

- Has lost consciousness
- Has a loss of memory about the injury
- Is having seizures
- Is unable to move limbs or extremities
- Has blood or fluid coming from the nose or ears
- Is under the influence of alcohol or other drugs

Go to a physician when the person

- Has vision problems
- Is vomiting repeatedly
- Has a change in behavior (sleep, irritability or lethargy)
- Is drowsy
- Has a severe or persistent headache
- Is slurring speech
- Is experiencing difficulty walking or balancing

Important: If a child under 2 years old suffers a head injury, see a physician immediately.

Remember: Head injuries don't heal the same way broken arms or legs do. You can suffer many kinds of head injuries, including skull fractures, concussions, cerebral contusions, lacerations and intracranial hemorrhaging. Brain injuries are unpredictable. They may not be apparent right away. Observe the victim carefully. Symptoms of bleeding inside the head usually occur within the first 24 to 72 hours.

More Injury Prevention Tips

Brain damage is serious, can be life altering and certainly is life threatening, but beyond the hardhat and helmet, remember these basic safety guidelines:

- ✔ Think before you act.
- ✔ Avoid creating safety hazards.
- ✔ Choose the right tools for the job, and use them properly.
- ✔ Concentrate on what you're doing.
- ✔ Look out for warnings.
- ✔ Obey safety signs and labels.
- ✔ Ask for help when you need it.
- ✔ Share your own safety skills.
- ✔ Cooperate for safe teamwork.

Both on and off the job, safety is a way of life — a way of longer life. It all starts with the right attitude: taking accident prevention seriously. True, with luck, even when rules are broken, sometimes accidents don't happen. But why take chances? By taking care of yourself with simple safety precautions, you can protect yourself and those around you.

USE YOUR HEAD!
Think Safety First

PC 5210

Head Protection

What Goes Wrong?

You may not always think about your head — or always protect it. That's why thousands of people suffer mild to severe head injuries each year, on and off the job. What puts you at risk for head injury? Forgetting to wear a hardhat or helmet, distraction, carelessness, fatigue or alcohol and drug use.

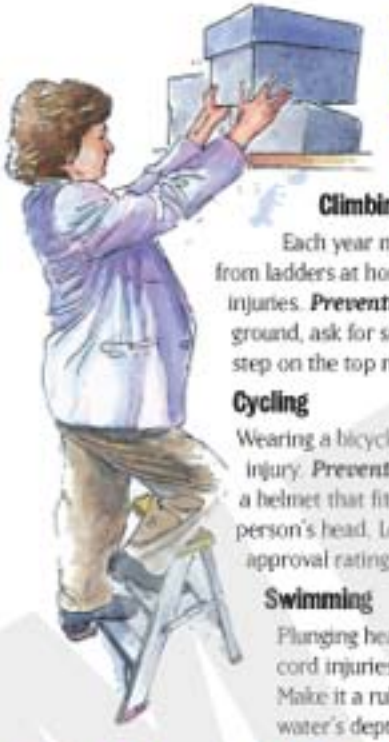
The Hazards

- Falling or flying objects
- Bumping your head against a fixed object
- Electrical shock or burns due to contact with exposed electrical conductors
- Falling off of a scaffold
- Tripping over an electrical cord
- Falling on a wet floor
- Falling from a stepladder

From Healthy to Hurt

Your brain stays safely enclosed inside your skull, the skull acting as a protective covering. But a blow to the head — being struck by an object or injured in a fall, car wreck or sports activity, for example — can cause a brain injury.

How? An outside force that is strong enough actually causes the brain to move within the skull, or worse, the skull breaks and the brain suffers a direct blow. Brain injury also occurs when a person's head undergoes rapid acceleration or deceleration, such as during a car wreck or in Shaken Baby Syndrome, where the brain sloshes back and forth inside the skull. When the brain moves in such a way, nerve fibers pull apart and damage delicate brain tissue.



At-Home and Recreational Risks: Remember These Rules

Climbing Ladders

Each year more than 160,000 people are injured after falling from ladders at home; about 15 percent die as a result of their injuries. ***Prevention:*** Make sure your ladder is placed on even ground, ask for someone to hold it steady and spot you, and don't step on the top rung.

Cycling

Wearing a bicycle helmet can significantly reduce the risk of head injury. ***Prevention:*** Make sure every member of your family wears a helmet that fits snugly, has adjustable straps and sits level on the person's head. Look for labels inside the helmet indicating its safety approval rating.

Swimming

Plunging headfirst into too-shallow water can result in spinal cord injuries, paralysis or fatal head trauma. ***Prevention:*** Make it a rule: Feet first, first time and until you're sure of the water's depth.

On the Job: Hardhats Save Lives

OSHA requires a protective helmet or hardhat to be worn by anyone in an area where there is a potential for head injuries, such as from falling objects. Follow these guidelines to ensure that your hardhat will protect you the way it should:

Inspect suspension (inside the hat) for signs of wear such as cracks, graying or cuts or tears in the straps and headband. Suspensions exhibiting these characteristics should be removed and replaced immediately.

Check your hardhat shell for signs of deterioration: stiffness or brittleness and faded, dull or chalky appearance. Remember, hardhats are susceptible to UV light damage, temperature extremes and chemical deterioration. Experts say you shouldn't store your hat in direct sunlight. Paints, paint thinners and some cleaning agents also can weaken the shell.

Don't wear anything inside the hat, such as a baseball cap, that affects the clearance between the shell and your head.

Never paint, sit on or throw hardhats. These actions may cause cracks or deterioration and can compromise your safety.

Replace any hardhat that has been struck by a blow.

(Source: OSHA)

IN THE CAR

Make sure the headrest (head restraint) on your seat is positioned to prevent your head and neck from jerking backward in the event your vehicle is hit from behind. You'll decrease your chance of suffering whiplash.

Get the Right Fit

Hardhats come in various sizes. To make sure a hardhat fits correctly, there should be a 1 1/4-inch clearance between your head and the shell.

In addition, a hardhat should fit squarely on the top of the head and not be tilted to one side or the back. Hardhats should not fall off when the head is bent down. A chin strap can secure a hardhat.

Regardless of what type of head protection you use, it won't work if you don't wear it.