

Preventing Head Injuries in Children – basic safety



*The Child Brain Injury Trust is a national charity supporting anyone affected by childhood acquired brain injury. The following information has been developed to help the reader understand more about brain injury and some of the associated issues. Every effort has been taken to ensure the information is accurate and up to date. If you require more immediate support or assistance please contact our **Advice, Information & Referral Service on 0303 3032248.***

Many head injuries are the result of accidents that are very difficult to predict or avoid. Although no child is injury proof, parents and carers can take some simple steps to keep children from getting head injuries. Follow these tips to reduce the risk of brain injury:

Safety in the home

- Use a safety gate at the top and the bottom of stairs and keep stairs free of any clutter
- Check windows are lockable and cannot be opened by a child, especially bedroom windows
- Use a nonslip mat in the bathtub or shower
- Make sure rugs are secure and clean up spillages to prevent someone slipping
- Don't let children play on fire escapes or balconies
- Do not leave a young infant alone on a high place such as a bed or sofa
- Do not let your children play on stairs or jump on or from furniture
- Do not let children jump on beds
- Keep the side rails on cots

Car Safety

Always wear a seat belt in a motor vehicle. Small children should always sit in the back seat of a car and be secured in child safety seats or booster seats that are appropriate for their size and weight. A seat that fits poorly can be dangerous. Your child should wear a seatbelt at all times when they are in a car or other motor vehicle.

Do not drive in a car with a child when you have been drinking alcohol or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription medications that can impair the ability to drive.

For current Guidance on Car Seat legislation and guidance please refer to the following pages from the .GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/using-a-child-car-seat-or-booster-seat>



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Safety helmets

Helmets help to prevent head injuries. Your child should wear a helmet that fits properly, and with the chin strap fastened.

Always wear a helmet while riding a bicycle, skateboard, scooter or motorcycle. Also wear appropriate head protection when playing contact sports like rugby, or when skiing, skating, snowboarding or riding a horse.

Your local sports or bike shop will be able to help make certain the helmet fits properly.

Road safety

Road traffic accidents are the biggest cause of death and disability among young people in the UK. The injuries that children receive can be really severe and include being paralysed or brain damaged for life. Many of the young people who are involved in these situations are needlessly injured, as they could have avoided. They often involve accidents in cars, on scooters and motorbikes, as well as on bicycles or pedestrians on foot.

Young people can easily be put under pressure from friends to accept a lift with a young driver who has been drinking alcohol or taking illegal drugs. These drivers are more likely to drive too fast, talk on a phone while driving, take stupid risks and ultimately are far more likely to be involved in an accident. It doesn't matter who the driver is, they might be a good friend, boyfriend or girlfriend or someone you've just met. Never accept a lift under these circumstances, your safety must come first.

Always wear a seat belt whilst travelling in a motor vehicle. Children should always sit in the back seat.

Alcohol and drug awareness

22% of 11-15 year olds have taken illegal substances in their lifetime, and every year nearly 5,000 young people in England are admitted to hospital because of alcohol. Drinking alcohol can sometimes lead to addiction, which can have devastating effects such as liver damage. Young people who have consumed alcohol or taken drugs are far more likely to take risks that may result in serious injury, such as climbing buildings, crossing railway lines or getting into fights.

Be pro-active in talking to children about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. There is no evidence that talking about drugs or alcohol encourages children to take them.

Playground safety

Make sure playground surfaces are safe. Use playgrounds that have shock-absorbing materials on the ground. They should be made of shock-absorbing material, such as wood mulch or sand. Always take care and supervise children when playing on trampolines, and make sure they have a safety net around them.

Building site safety

Building sites have long been a place of fascination for young people and children, especially boys. They can be seen as a fun place to explore and play, however they are places that are full of dangers. Many children are injured, and several die each year as a result of accidents on building sites. ROSPA has safety information packs available that specifically aim to raise awareness of the dangers of construction sites amongst teachers, pupils and the wider community. They're available here: <http://www.rospa.com/>

Safety helmets

Whether cycling, horse riding, skiing, climbing or playing contact sports, the risk of head injury is always there. One indisputable fact is that wearing protective helmets helps to prevent head injuries, and saves lives. Children, and adults, should always wear an appropriate helmet for the sporting or leisure activity they are taking part in.

Nowadays they are a relatively cheap item to buy, and are widely available. One important thing to remember is to ensure that a helmet fits properly. Your local sports or bike shop will be able to help make certain the helmet fits properly.

You can even buy a cycle helmet from the Child Brain Injury Trust! We have teamed up with a helmet manufacturer to offer some really good quality helmets, at a discounted price available via our Ebay shop: <http://www.ebay.co.uk/egw/ebay-for-charity/charity-profile/Child-Brain-Injury-Trust/19643>

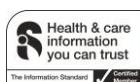
Sources:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/traumatic-brain-injury/DS00552/DSECTION=prevention>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000130.htm>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-injury-severe-/Pages/Prevention.aspx>

<http://www.rospa.com/childsafety/>



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<http://www.brake.org.uk/info-resources/info-research/advice/21-facts-a-resources/resources/322-youngpeople>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/traumatic-brain-injury/DS00552/DSECTION=prevention>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000130.htm>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Head-injury-severe-/Pages/Prevention.aspx>

http://safe.met.police.uk/drugs_and_alcohol/get_the_facts.html

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/keeping_your_child_safe/

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The Child Brain Injury Trust relies on grants and donations to enable us to continue our work supporting families affected by childhood acquired brain injury.

Please help us to continue our work by making a donation today – [CLICK HERE](#) to make a one off donation or set up a monthly donation.

Thank you – your donation does make a difference.



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