

Careful examination reveals no serious intracranial injury. Nurses should provide parents with verbal and written instructions of signs and symptoms that warrant concern and the need for medical reevaluation (see [Family-Centered Care](#) box).

## Family-Centered Care

### Maintaining Contact

Maintaining contact with parents for continued observation and reevaluation of the child, when indicated, facilitates early diagnosis and treatment of possible complications from head injury, such as hematoma, cerebral edema, and posttraumatic seizures. Children are generally hospitalized for 24 to 48 hours of observation if their family lives far from medical facilities or lacks transportation or a telephone, which would provide access to immediate help. Other circumstances, such as language or other communication barriers, or even emotional trauma, may hinder learning and make it difficult for families to feel confident in caring for their child at home.

Parents are instructed to check the child every 2 hours to determine any changes in responsiveness. The sleeping child should be awakened to see if he or she can be roused normally. Parents are advised to maintain contact with the health professional, who typically examines the child again in 1 or 2 days. The manifestations of epidural hematoma in children do not generally appear until 24 hours or more after injury.

Children with severe injuries, those who have lost consciousness for more than a few minutes, and those with prolonged and continued seizures or other focal or diffuse neurologic signs must be hospitalized until their condition is stable and their neurologic signs have diminished. The child is maintained on NPO (nothing by mouth) status or restricted to clear liquids until it is determined that vomiting will not occur. IV fluids are indicated in the child who is comatose, displays dulled sensorium, or is persistently vomiting. The volume of IV fluid is carefully monitored to minimize the possibility of over hydration in cases of SIADH and cerebral edema. However, damage to the hypothalamus or pituitary gland may