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URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/headinjuries.html>

Head Injuries

Also called: Cranial injuries, Skull fractures, Skull injuries

Chances are you've bumped your head before. Often, the injury is minor because your skull is hard and it protects your brain. But other head injuries can be more severe, such as a skull fracture, concussion [<https://medlineplus.gov/concussion.html>] , or traumatic brain injury [<https://medlineplus.gov/traumaticbraininjury.html>] .

Head injuries can be open or closed. A closed injury does not break through the skull. With an open, or penetrating, injury, an object pierces the skull and enters the brain. Closed injuries are not always less severe than open injuries.

Some common causes of head injuries are falls [<https://medlineplus.gov/falls.html>] , motor vehicle accidents [<https://medlineplus.gov/motorvehiclesafety.html>] , violence, and sports injuries [<https://medlineplus.gov/sportsinjuries.html>] .

It is important to know the warning signs of a moderate or severe head injury. Get help immediately if the injured person has:

- A headache that gets worse or does not go away
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Convulsions or seizures
- An inability to wake up
- Dilated (enlarged) pupil in one or both eyes
- Slurred speech
- Weakness or numbness in the arms or legs
- Loss of coordination
- Increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation

Doctors use a neurologic exam and imaging tests to make a diagnosis. Treatment depends on the type of injury and how severe it is.

NIH: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Start Here

- Head Injuries [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/head-injuries/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/lesiones-en-la-cabeza-es/?adfree=true>]
- Overview of Head Injuries [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/home/injuries-and-poisoning/head-injuries/overview-of-head-injuries>] (Merck & Co., Inc.)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/hogar/traumatismos-y-envenenamientos/traumatismos-craneales/introducci%C3%B3n-a-los-traumatismos-craneales>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Brain MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/mri-brain>]
 (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/mri-brain>]

Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/headct>]

- Skull Radiography [<https://www.asrt.org/docs/default-source/patientpages/skull.pdf>] (American Society of Radiologic Technologists) - PDF - In English and Spanish

- Ultrasound: Head (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/ultrasound-head.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/ultrasound-head.html>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Head Trauma, First Aid [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/first-aid-head-trauma/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Head Trauma: First Aid [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-head-trauma/basics/ART-20056626?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/first-aid/first-aid-head-trauma/basics/art-20056626?p=1>]

Specifics

- Bump on the Head: When Is It a Serious Head Injury? [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/intracranial-hematoma/expert-answers/head-injury/FAQ-20058442?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Craniocerebral Trauma [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Craniocerebral+Trauma%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Head Injuries [[https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22head+injuries%22+NOT+\(traumatic+OR+concussion\)&aggFilters=status:not%20rec](https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22head+injuries%22+NOT+(traumatic+OR+concussion)&aggFilters=status:not%20rec)]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Skull Fractures [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Skull+Fractures%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: A Clinical Audit of the Use of CT Head Scan Post-Inpatient... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40724165>]
- Article: Evaluation of Artificial Intelligence-based diagnosis for facial fractures, advantages compared with... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40665293>]
- Article: A YOLOv8 algorithm for safety helmet wearing detection in complex environment. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40624039>]
- Head Injuries -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Skull+Fractures%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Craniocerebral+Trauma%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+A ND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [<https://www.cdc.gov/>]
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>]
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/>] 

Children

- Head Injuries [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/head-injury.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/head-injury.html>]
- Head Injury: What to Do if Your Child Loses Consciousness [<https://www.healthychildren.org/english/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/pages/loss-of-consciousness.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)

Patient Handouts

- Head injury - first aid [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000028.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000028.htm>]
- Skull fracture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000060.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000060.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

[Head CT scan](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003786.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003786.htm>]

[Head injury - first aid](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000028.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000028.htm>]

[Preventing head injuries in children](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000130.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000130.htm>]

[Skull fracture](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000060.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000060.htm>]

[Skull x-ray](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003802.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003802.htm>]

Related Health Topics

[Concussion](https://medlineplus.gov/concussion.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/concussion.html>]

[Traumatic Brain Injury](https://medlineplus.gov/traumaticbraininjury.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/traumaticbraininjury.html>]

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