



# Maine Farm Safety Program

by Dawna L. Cyr, farm safety project assistant, and Steven B. Johnson, Ph.D., Extension crops specialist

## *First Aid for Head Injuries*

**T**he main concern in a head injury is that there may be bleeding inside the skull. This can occur even if the skull is not clearly damaged. The accumulation of blood may eventually put pressure on the brain and cause brain damage. Head injuries are often not serious, but brain injuries can be.

### Head Injury Guidelines

Answering the following questions will help to determine whether the victim should be taken to a physician, the emergency room, or treated at home.

Has unconsciousness, loss of memory about the injury, or a seizure occurred? If yes, seek medical attention.

### Are any of the following present?

- Visual problems
- Bleeding from eyes, ears or mouth

- Change in behavior (sleep, irritability, lethargy)
- Fluid draining from nose
- Repeated vomiting
- Irregular breathing or heart rate
- Child under the age of 2
- Person under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- Possible child or domestic abuse

### First Aid for Head Injuries

- Any threat of brain damage from a head injury should be checked by a physician.
- Ice applied to the bruised area will help control swelling.
- Any vision problems or bleeding from the eyes or ears as a result of a head injury warrants a trip to a physician.

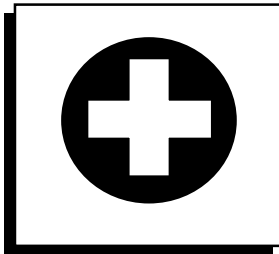
If yes to any of the previous, seek medical attention.

Is there a cut? Check first aid section on cuts for severity.

If answers to the above questions are no, then apply home treatment.

### **Home Treatment for Head Injuries**

Apply ice to the bruised area to minimize the swelling. A bump (goose egg) often develops. The size of the bump does not suggest the severity of the injury. A small bump may be serious, and a large bump may mean only a minor injury.



Observe the victim carefully. Symptoms of bleeding inside the head usually occur within the first 24 to 72 hours.

A typical minor head injury occurs when a victim runs into someone or something and bangs his or her head. A bump usually begins to form on the stunned victim. The person may vomit once or twice in the first few hours. He or she may nap after all the excitement, but arouse easily. Neither pupil is enlarged. Within eight hours, the person is back to normal, except for the prominent goose egg swelling.

This Maine Farm Safety fact sheet is part of an educational fact sheet series produced by University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information on farm safety, contact your county Extension office.

For the most current Extension publications, see our online catalog at

**[www.umext.maine.edu](http://www.umext.maine.edu)**

*A Member of the University of Maine System*