

When Injuries Happen: Helping Your Family Cope

When a child is injured, the whole family may be affected. There may be changes in behaviors and emotions. These changes are normal and often don't last long. Family members can work through this time together.

What are common responses after an injury?

After an injury, family members may:

- Feel restless and unable to relax.
- Have problems sleeping.
- Feel crabby or cranky.
- Eat too much or too little.
- Become more fearful.
- Feel helpless, like it's too much to handle.
- Become too protective of family members.
- Have trouble paying attention.
- Feel guilt, sad or depressed.
- Want to blame someone else.
- Keep replaying what happened.

What can be done to help?

- Talk about what happened.
- Talk about your fears, worries or anger.
- Have children draw pictures or use toys to help them let out their feelings.
- Encourage teens to write down their thoughts if they are uncomfortable talking
- Be patient with yourself and others. Everyone might feel stressed.
- Help each other remember to do daily tasks/chores.
- Follow regular meal and sleep times.
- Avoid using alcohol or drugs.
- Do something special for yourself and your family.
- Give yourself and your family time to feel better again. This may take awhile. Sometimes it may take weeks or months.

It takes time

The changes you see are your family's way of working through your child's injury. Your family should be able to return to a normal routine in a short period of time. If you are concerned about your family's recovery from the experience, tell a member of your child's health care team.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.